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OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS  
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DAVID DOBSON, M.A.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
BACHELOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Centre for Educational Policy and Management, School of Education, Open  
University.

May, 1993

Volume 1 of 5

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## ABSTRACT

This research examines the role and development of senior management teams in secondary comprehensive schools. It was undertaken by a deputy headteacher with seven year's experience as a member of a senior management team, three years as a senior teacher and four years as deputy head. The research is a response to both the changing nature and role of senior management and the need for recommendations for future INSET of senior management teams.

An opportunity sample of four senior management teams of comprehensive schools in Cambridgeshire and North London was selected. The research was carried out by in-depth interviews and periods of observation in the four schools, and informal conversation with informants. This followed a literature survey of existing research into the skills and training of school managers. The interviews were taped and focused on the role and needs of serving senior management teams in order to provide a basis for a future development programme. Attempts were made to pick out those issues which brought about anxiety amongst senior management teams and to identify those skills which underpin their performance and those where assistance and support would be welcome in their acquisition thereof.

Major categories emerged from the interviews:-

- (a) The tasks of senior management teams.
- (b) The demands made on them and their coping strategies.
- (c) The needs of senior management teams.

Recommendations were made that a development programme for all senior management teams in secondary schools should be established. This would include a policy for training the whole team, a training programme for senior managers prior to their commencing an appointment, an induction programme which meets the specific needs of individuals and a policy for training existing deputies for headship.

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1:1 A Personal Interest

As deputy headteacher in a 800 co-educational 11-18 comprehensive school I have become very conscious of the importance of the senior management team in a school. At the outset of the research, in order to arrive at a definition of senior management, an opportunity sample of approximately fifteen headteachers was telephoned. There appeared to be general consensus that the separation between senior and middle management occurs below senior teacher (Grade E) level. My professional experience has emphasised to me the critical role of senior managers in effective school organisation. At the same time however, my contact with many senior managers during the last seven years suggests that some seem confused about their roles and lack management skills. This may be due in part to the fact that the role of the senior management team is still in the process of evolution. It may also be due to the sparsity of management training and induction courses for senior managers at school or LEA levels. A survey of the literature on the role and development of senior management teams in schools was also found to be sparse.

In recent years however, I have seen the demands on senior management teams increase while there may have been insufficient thought to the significance of their managerial role, their need for training and an understanding of the difficulties which they might experience. With the above issues in mind the main aims of the enquiry were:-

- (a) to investigate the composition, organisation and role of the senior management team in four secondary schools.

(b) to establish the major needs of senior managers in schools with a view to making a contribution to their INSET and professional development.

(c) to consider strategies and produce recommendations for developing senior management teams in secondary schools.

Clearly I wished to undertake research that would be relevant to senior management in schools today. In addition I felt the need to research an area which could be taken back into school or utilised in some professional way. The investigation has been one of a continuing learning process. Visiting schools outside my own Authority has been informative and added considerably to my understanding and appreciation of educational management.

As well as adding significantly to my own development, I hope that the research will also be of use to others responsible for planning and developing senior management training. This issue is extremely high on the agenda of LEA's, as well as that of the government. Following on from DES circular 3/83 and the Management Task Force there have been various recent initiatives from the Secondary Heads Association, the National Association of Head Teachers and several authorities. I hope that the findings of this research and the recommendations put forward may help clarify the issues involved.

The purpose of improving senior management performance is to provide for the educational needs of young people at a time when schools are experiencing intense change. The aim of management in, or of,

education is to improve "teaching" and "learning". This research report and the recommendations it offers are based on this assumption.

## 1:2 Background

There is no doubt that in recent years schools have come under intensive public scrutiny and criticism. The failure of pay talks and talks on conditions of service between the employing authorities and the teachers unions in 1986 led to Kenneth Baker, the then Secretary of State for Education, imposing a pay award and Conditions of Service. This meant a change in the working conditions of most staff with hours of service being defined over and above the normal pupil - contact day. The headteacher now has the power to direct certain aspects of this non-contact time.

Specific job descriptions and appraisal are to be introduced for teachers of all levels of responsibility. This is a management task which so far many schools have avoided in order to maintain a flexibility of service and goodwill from their staff. A move towards complete job descriptions provides an opportunity to move towards the situation described by Richardson (1973) who advocated clear job descriptions to alleviate role conflict and ambiguity. The need for co-operation and flexibility in job descriptions is essential. Realisation that the departure of one or more members of staff may result in a change in one's own or several colleagues' job descriptions must be faced, together with the possibility of annual reviews. Nevertheless this involvement is part of the senior management's responsibility. Skills of leadership and delegation by

the headteacher in particular will be required to enable new initiatives to develop. The preparation and realisation of school development plans depend upon successful team work throughout the school and senior management must ensure maximum use of the talents of all members of staff.

Since the Education Reform Act in 1988 further new requirements have been placed on senior management; 'open enrolment', school based financial management, the increased power and influence of governors in all matters involving the school, and the possibility of the school leaving Local Authority control have meant that senior management has been made answerable to a whole range of concerned and interested parties. This act has brought education increasingly to the forefront and indeed has been sharply spotlighted by the political parties and the media. Moves towards greater accountability have led to an expectation of greater parental choice, the publication of school prospectuses to include examination results, the publication of examination league tables and some schools having to compete with each other to recruit pupils in a falling roll situation.

Certainly the areas of public scrutiny have been widened and senior management will have to become more aware of these growing influences from outside the school. Management within schools is realising the need to involve the local community in what goes on in the school. The need to advertise the school's strong points and to give the school a high profile of achievement is becoming more evident. If a school is to flourish under these new conditions, time and effort will have to be expended in keeping potential parents informed of

school activities and developments. The school which fails to make such an effort may find itself overtaken by others in the locality and pay the price by a possible reduction in numbers of pupils and facilities.

It is frequently asserted that the senior management team, and in particular the headteacher, is crucial for the effective working of a school. A much cited paragraph from a government publication stresses this:

"Headteachers, and other senior staff with management responsibilities within the schools, are of crucial importance. Only if they are effective managers of their teaching staffs and the material resources available to them as well as possessing the qualities needed for educational leadership, can schools offer their pupils the quality of education which they have a right to expect." (Bolam 1986).

Every senior management team "has got to have a leader. The leader has got to be the headteacher" claimed a headteacher (who had been in post for twenty years) during the pilot study. In order that a school might be effectively managed amidst all the recent innovations there appears to be a need for a new type of head in schools today. The demand is for a high powered executive with managerial responsibility for the deployment of capital, labour and material resources in a carefully integrated and monitored educational process. Historically it might be the change described by Hughes (1975) as one from a complete autocrat to a leading professional and chief executive.

"As demands grow on schools for improved quality and broader services, a new leadership emerges. No longer managers of routines, school administrators need increasingly to take initiative. They must understand change as well as manage it. They must involve and motivate staff, create a positive culture, build a group vision, develop quality educational programmes, provide a positive instructional environment, encourage a high performance, apply evaluation processes, analyse and interpret outcomes, be accountable for results, and maximise human resources. They also must stimulate public support and engage community leaders. Finally, they must be certain that schools are persistent in getting students to understand the challenge they face, and what is required of them to compete on an equal footing in a global environment. In short (they) must educate and lead." (Thomson, 1992, p.6)

Unless headteachers delegate some leadership functions to others then the tasks in hand are formidable. Headteachers need to continuously develop their knowledge and skills of leadership if they are to avoid anxiety and being subject to the stresses discussed later in this research. Additionally it is suggested that leadership involves relationships outside as well as inside the school.

According to Nicholson (1989) the construction and development of an effective senior team by the headteacher is crucial as the implementation of LMS has widespread implications for senior management teams. They must now undertake specialist functions such as financial management, marketing and personnel management, particularly internal promotions, not normally performed in the past at institutional level in education. (Cave and Wilkinson 1990)

The use of funds has been given to schools with Local Authorities passing almost all expenditure related to the school to the governing body and headteacher. Management teams in schools therefore now have to respond to and work with a more influential governing body. Recent changes in education allow for more parental participation on governing bodies, and the governing body itself is endowed with greater powers of sanction and control over matters of school life. Not least of the possibilities of actions from governors is that the process of "opting out" of the state system may be initiated by parents and governors and even carried through without the support of the staff at the school. This could cause problems within the school as the criteria of management of the establishment would be altered, with greater emphasis being placed on financial survival, entry policy, staff contracts of service and the implications for the hiring and firing of staff.

Innovation and development within a school may only occur if a cohesive senior management team is able to and support such development. The idea that a head alone can operate and manage a large or even medium sized secondary school is outdated. The head who tries to take too much upon him or herself will probably find his/her decisions are poor and/or poorly received, and is likely to suffer high levels of anxiety. Cave and Wilkinson (1990) claim that while ultimate accountability rests with headteachers, they do not have to become specialists in all areas. Tasks may be delegated and those who are required to carry them out will need training in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and competence. Cave and



Wilkinson (1990) argue that tasks must be delegated to the senior team.

Delegation at this level does not mean giving responsibility solely for particular administrative tasks to deputy heads and senior teachers, or allowing them responsibility only when the head is absent. It might possibly mean that there should be shared responsibility which includes all members of the senior management team working as a unit. Nicholson (1989) believes that the quality and accuracy of the information on which to base decisions will be crucial and that all members of the senior management team must be involved in gathering that information.

In this way the school's policy would be determined by a senior group of staff, each member exercising a constructive role within that team, and bringing to it a wealth of experience. Policy can then be presented in a unified and coherent way and there will be a feeling of pride in shared achievement amongst the senior management team. The latter therefore provides a model for the operation of teams in the school. However, other teams in the school will have an example to follow only if the senior team is operating in a planned and coherent way.

In the past the hierarchical structure of schools with the head at the top of the pyramid has meant that senior management teams may not have had an opportunity to develop. Everard (1988) writes anecdotal notes from his observations of senior management meetings.

"The senior management team met every morning and always had an overcrowded agenda. The first item took most of the time; it was to determine whether the school rules permitted boys to wear two earrings, or only one, in their left ears. After all aspects of the problem had been ventilated, it was decided that the relevant rule was ambiguously worded. The head undertook to rewrite the rule himself".

Everard (1988) goes on to say that routine tasks are delegated with little opportunity for the team to be involved in creative thought and planning; there is also the idea in some schools that the function of the senior management team, and the particularly the deputy, is to serve as an intermediary between the body of staff and the headteacher. This view was supported by a 1989 SHA survey which studied the role of the deputy head. Gray (1985) found that there has been a lack of consideration to team building and development in schools. Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1986) highlight the inadequacy of training for seniority and leadership in education. Their observations reveal the need for "heads to review the responsibilities of all management role holders in their schools" and also the need for a review and explicit demarcation of the division of duties between heads and the remainder of the senior management team. Spencer (1991) writes "Given the extent of changes in schools the need for delegation by headteachers to deputies and others will remain essential to the efficient functioning of schools." (p.83)

The belief in the central position of the headteacher has its roots in educational history. Headteachers have been seen as the people on the boundary between the school and its environment, acting as

"gatekeepers" of change and controlling the flow of information into and out of the school. They supposedly act as the leading professionals within schools and perform the various tasks which classical management theory attributes to them: planning, organising, staffing, directing, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting. However the question of training school managers has only been considered seriously since the nineteen seventies (Barrell 1984). Initial provision was largely based on strict administrative requirements, rather than on a theoretical understanding of school management (Barrell 1984). Most educational management theory has drawn very largely on general management theory (Everard 1984). This has been derived in turn from the industrial model. As Hoyle (1975) points out, if schools are considered along with other organisations, we may gain a better understanding about organisations in general; however if we wish to learn about schools in particular, they have to become the focus of our attention.

The administrative tasks of senior management in secondary schools in England have been perceived by various writers in different ways. Morgan et al (1983) divided the work of headteachers into the leading professional or administrator dimensions. Others traced the job of the senior teacher and deputy head from the expressive leadership model (Burnham 1968) through the division of pastoral or curriculum responsibility model, to the model of the senior management team (Todd and Dennison 1978). It is necessary also to perceive the headteacher in more fundamental terms, as the manager of an institution. Mintzberg (1973) proposed a series of "roles" which are associated with management in general. He specified the tasks which he associated with each "role" and this will be discussed in the

following chapter. These ideas were adapted by Webb and Lyons (1982) to the context of English secondary schools and provide various hypotheses some of which will be examined during the course of the research.

### 1:3 The Emerging Questions

In order to achieve the aims of the research it is necessary to know what senior management teams do in theory and practice. If there is a gap between the ideal and actual performance of senior management teams, the forces that make them behave differently may be inherent in the system. In this case it may be difficult or even impossible for training to make any difference to the job performance. On the other hand it may be possible to modify these forces; at least one needs to know what the restraints are.

What are the skills required of senior managers in terms of skills that they have, or need, before they are appointed (i.e. what qualities, experience and expertise are appointees looking for?) and also what are the skills that they need in practice in order to be able to carry out their functions properly? No longer is it possible to take teachers out of the classroom and expect them to perform as a managers of what may be £1.5 million plus businesses. Should an understanding of the theory of management be a necessary element of a headteacher's equipment, along with the more pragmatic skills of financial control, public relations, leadership and delegation required by managers of schools? How are these skills acquired, if indeed they are? What training is currently provided by authorities in school management? It may be possible for authorities to provide

different forms of training within the constraints of the existing system. This study has implications in that its findings may suggest modifications to training that is currently provided. It may also have implications for our general understanding of senior management and for future research.

#### 1:4 Summary

This chapter has set the general context for the research and in particular has posed a number of questions:

What do senior management teams, i.e. headteachers, deputies and senior teachers do according to the literature? What do they do in practice? Is there an ideal model of senior management? If so, where does it come from and what are the constraints? What are the skills required for successful senior management? What training is currently provided? What changes could authorities make to school management training? What are the implications for our general understanding of senior management and for future research?

The research will be carried out by in-depth interviews and periods of observation in four schools but this will be preceded by a literature survey of existing research into the skills and training of school managers.

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## CHAPTER 2

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### 2:1 INTRODUCTION

An historical perspective of the headteacher role inevitably spans the time since schools were established in this country, and the role of the headteacher has been well documented in the literature. In contrast, the historical perspective of the senior management team is found in only a very limited number of publications. This chapter reviews the limited conceptual research literature which is of relevance to the work of senior managers as a backcloth, so to speak, for the empirical work undertaken by the writer.

### 2:2 Role Theory

In the literature on the concept of 'role', writers such as Sarbin (1968) have commented on the inconsistencies and lack of clarity of definitions of role. In its simplest form the idea of role may be explained by the analogy of actors on the stage who act out the script given to them. Within the prescribed text, they will, because of their unique personality and talent, add their own individual personal interpretation and emphasis to the role. However the role is independent of the actors; it has, as it were, been prescribed for them, and these 'prescriptions' form the basis for the development of role theory.

Role indicates: a position (or status), a specific occupational position; a pattern of behaviour associated with that position; and a pattern of expectations held of the occupant of that position.

(Hoyle, 1969). Role may be conceived as a set of tasks or responsibilities (Morgan and Turner, 1976, John, 1980). Investigating many definitions of the concept of role in order to classify them, Hughes (1972) similarly suggested that there were three categories; role expectation of others; role as self expectation and a third category, role as actual behaviour. Although these categories are useful in considering the comprehensive nature of the concept of role, it is important to recognise their interrelatedness.

People respond to others in terms of the mutual expectations controlling the role relationship much more than as unique persons (Hargreaves 1972). Many positions have complementary roles with which they are especially related, and these have a particularly important part to play in defining the roles. The categorisation of other people in terms of roles influences the way their behaviour is given meaning and personality traits are attributed to them (Hargreaves 1972).

A role is defined by the expectations of all the individuals and groups who form the role-set. There is constant re-definition of a role, which involves not only the expectations of others, but how the individual perceives these. Excessive clarification of job specifications may lead to role constraint, personal dissatisfaction and an unacceptable level of control, (Maw 1977), as well as to rigidity and a hierarchy of authority (Bush 1981).

A few fundamental aspects of a particular role performance are agreed which, to use the earlier analogy, the actor must or must not do. In



other areas a certain behaviour is preferred, but this is not obligatory. Then there is the very large area where the actors may do as they please, because their behaviour in those aspects is irrelevant to the role (Hargreaves 1972, Morgan and Turner 1976).

There may be a lack of consensus in the expectations held for a role holder (Coulson 1972). Gross et al (1966) in their work confirmed the usefulness of role theory, but emphasized the importance of clearly stating the meanings of the concept in particular cases. However role definitions of senior managers have not been spelled out although a wide variety of expectations for this role exist and leadership role is one such expectation for members of a senior management team. How an actor perceives the degree of consensus among the definers of his role is important. Without the assumption of consensus, role becomes an unstructured concept of somewhat limited and questionable descriptive value (Coulson 1972).

According to Mintzberg (1973) roles are predetermined even though individuals may interpret them in different ways. On the other hand behaviour is not completely idiosyncratic. A role draws our attention to regular behaviour, and this is predictable to role partners and informal observers. There is a limit to tolerance towards individuals who deviate from the characteristics appropriate to the norm (Popitz 1972). When people fail through being badly cast or forgetful, they must accept guilt feelings and/or negative sanctions from their role partners, unless they can persuade them to modify their expectations (Heading 1972). Members of the role set probably have different expectations for each of the role relationships. The expectations of some will exert more influence on

the person's conception of their role performance than will those of others (Hargreaves 1972).

Any lack of consensus about a particular role is overcome conceptually by resorting to such concepts as role conflict. Role conflict may arise from different expectations of different groups; from two (or more) roles being held simultaneously and from expectations of others and one's own personality needs (Hoyle 1969). One dimension of potential role conflict has been highlighted by Hughes in Bush et al (1980 p.238 ff) and in an earlier work (Hughes 1975) when he suggested the reconciling of professional and administrative roles of professional educators. He argued that such a dual role can be a very effective way of lessening conflict in professionally staffed organisations. Therefore although role conflict may be concentrated in an individual, 'the greater good' may be experienced by the organisation. In contrast Handy (1984) who claimed to know something of organisation theory but little of school, completed a survey of schools for a Schools Council Project. He formed the opinion that it would be wise to have leading professionals and administrators, but unwise to combine the two roles in one person because it would be an invitation to stress. A major reason for this particular role conflict would appear to be the limited amount of time allocated to senior managers to fulfil the dual roles of master teacher and senior manager.

The management of time may be an essential skill for a senior manager to acquire but it would appear that the workload of many is heavy, with a substantial teaching commitment for those other than the headteacher. Handy goes on to say that a lack of training and inept

practice in management techniques will add to the intensity of stress to the built in role conflicts for members of the senior management team.

Handy says that consideration should be given to the fact that senior managers are members of a profession. In writing about the teaching profession Handy says: "Certainly the traditions of professionalism remain strong. Tenure, the privacy of the classroom and the right to express one's own views in one's own ways, the sense of accountability primarily to one's profession - these are all hallmarks of a profession and of a person culture..... They (the hallmarks of a profession) do not sit well with graded hierarchies, standardised curricula and the management ethos of a large institution, all of which call for a role culture". (Handy 1984 p.16) Consequently there may well be conflict between a person as a professional within a professional culture and that person also fulfilling a role in a role culture.

Hoyle (1974) argues that some teachers are 'restricted professionals' whilst others respond to an 'extended professionalism'; namely they are involved in in-service work and value professional collaboration (Hoyle in Bush et al 1980 p.318). Gordon (1984) opens up a debate on 'Is Teaching a Profession?' which is taken up by Hoyle, who tentatively concludes that

"This voice (the teaching profession) would probably be strengthened if the education profession, rather than the teaching profession was able to develop a set of more widely shared values. But such a situation could probably only arise if there was a reconsideration of

patterns of training, career structure, salary structure and criteria for promotions." (Hoyle 1969 p.93)

Hoyle (1969) infers from his research that senior managers will be leaders (innovators) rather than narrow administrators (keeping the school ticking over) and that they have to be both task orientated and person orientated. However, as indicated above, role conflict may arise for senior managers in an attempt to reconcile their professional and administrative roles and this provides an area for consideration during the course of this study.

### 2:3 Leadership Theory and Management

Early research assumed that people were born leaders and attempted to find the distinguishing personality features of good leaders. Subsequently, researchers focussed attention on leadership behaviour and the concept of leadership style was developed. Leadership may be executive/professional, intellectual, and/or educational (Burnham 1969); its style may be autocratic, paternalistic, democratic or 'laissez-faire' (Bush 1981). Researchers have certainly found considerable variety and flexibility in leadership styles in schools.

Murphy et al (1983) say that management and leadership are often polarised at two ends of a continuum; they are however, interconnected and reinforcing activities since management involves leadership. According to Riches (1992) management structures and processes can be regarded as the "mechanisms" for the delivery of leadership. The more researchers began to analyse the term 'leadership' the more elaborate and sophisticated definitions

evolved. Lipman (1964) defines leadership as "the initiation of a new structure or procedure of accomplishing organizational goals and objectives". Stogdill (1958) defines leadership as those activities engaged in by the individual or members of a group which contribute significantly to the development and maintenance of role structure and goal direction necessary for effective group performance.

The consensus amongst writers seems to be that leadership is a process of influencing the activities of a group or an individual in efforts towards goal achievement in a given situation. Schools require effective leadership if they are to achieve any form of excellence. As Jacobsen (1980) states "Good leadership is not a luxury but a necessity for survival. Without such leadership our educational institutions will be unable to adapt effectively to changing and difficult times, let alone teach and function with excellence."

In 'Ten Good Schools' (DES 1977) we read that "without exception the heads have qualities of imagination and vision, tempered by realism, which has enabled them to sum up not only their present situation but also attainable future goals" (page 36). This sense of vision for the future is present in much writing on this topic.

"Leadership includes the direction of the institution, the setting of its vision and its standards and oversight into its working." (Handy 1984 p.35)

"Effective principals have a vision for their schools and of their role in making the vision a reality." (Manasse 1984 p.44)

One should therefore concentrate on discovering the "behavioural elements of effective management and leadership" (Murphy et al 1983) rather than on trying to polarise the two concepts.

Louis and Miles (1990) define leadership as relating to mission, direction and inspiration while management involves the designing and carrying out plans, getting things done and working effectively with people. Leavitt (1992) comments that leadership and management usually happen simultaneously and interactively and are usually done by the same person. Management is not just for stability but also for change, even though the latter is usually associated with leadership.

It is assumed in this research that the senior management team has a leadership role to fulfil, but, in the abundant literature on leadership not all concepts, research and theories may be relevant to school management practice. However the work of Hodgkinson (1983), and Hoyle (1982) pitches the role of leadership in a context of reality; implying that a variety of motives, skills and techniques are subsumed within the context of leadership. It is important that the concept of leadership should always be considered in the 'real' context in which it operates. It is also important to emphasize that the concept of leadership like that of a senior management team is a dynamic concept, and should not be thought of in a stereotyped or static way for the style of leadership may vary from person to person and from school to school. The concepts of 'leadership' and 'management' might therefore elucidate the characteristics of senior management teams, particularly in so far as a senior management's

function is concerned with initiative and managing change. It is hoped that the findings of this research might help to clarify the role of senior managers in schools and, in highlighting their training needs, make a contribution to more effective training courses for potential senior managers as well as those already in post.

#### 2.4. The Tasks of the Senior Management Team

There is a vast range of literature about management generally which includes work on the varying styles of leadership and the techniques of management. Literature in the non-educational world emphasizes teams as the main thrust of management development and training.

"Management development has as its focus the team of managers who jointly run an organisation." (Everard 1988)

Some literature on educational management suggests that there is little team development. "For heads, authority is at the very heart of their management situation and gets in the way of the group learning process, because it tends to isolate them from their colleagues rather than enabling them to work together as a team" (Gray 1985). Recent literature on educational management (Nicholson 1989, Cave 1990) now makes reference to team training and team development. Similarly a report by the School Management Task Force (HMSO 1990) claims "Recent work on the characteristics of effective work places greater emphasis on leadership and teamwork".

However, while the implementation of LMS will have widespread implications for senior management teams (Cave 1990) there is not an abundance of literature which concentrates on senior management team tasks and development.

#### 2:4:1 The Headteacher

During the seventies and early eighties research has used individual secondary schools as case studies and focused directly on the role of the headteacher as leader of the senior management team in guiding the school through change and innovation (Burgess 1983, Nicholls 1983). Literature on headship before this period was scarce, and in any case has been incorporated into the work of later writers. Some later work on headship (eg Paisey 1984, Dean 1985, Frith 1985, Hall, Mackay and Morgan 1986, Weindling and Earley 1987) has changed our understanding of headship. Since 1983 there have been pressures such as industrial action by teachers, and political attempts to redefine the place of schools in society which may have changed the nature of senior management and these processes are still at work.

However, as the headteacher in the pilot study claimed, while LMS has given the senior management team wider experience, the leader of the team has "got to be the Head" and the Head alone "carries the can." The head, as leader of the senior management team, is believed to be central to school life influencing its vigour, ethos, effectiveness, sensitivity and motivation (Barry and Tye 1972).

The model for the English head grew out of the Arnoldian tradition : a strong charismatic personality gave him authority within the



school, which he protected against the outside world. His concern for the moral and spiritual welfare of pupils was reflected in personal contact with them through teaching and identifying them by name (Westwood 1966). The Headmasters' Association in 1960 defined the job essentially in personal and charismatic terms, not in terms of administration or long term planning (Allen 1968).

Heads determine the objectives of the school; they take policy decisions and see that they are implemented. They need freedom to make appointments and allocate financial resources. Heads also need administrative skills but it is their authority and/or expertise which justify placing them in authority over others (Barrow 1976). These aspects are part of the paternalistic model of headship (Bush 1981).

Leadership is defined as a boundary function (Richardson 1973) and the senior management, but particularly the headteacher, is at the boundary with parents, pupils, community and teachers (Mays 1968).

The head, above all, represents the school to the governing body, the LEA and the wider community (Lyons 1974). Effective leadership needs to open channels of communication in two directions and to avoid conflicts of aims.

In order to relate the internal processes of the school to its environment, headteachers have to import knowledge and ideas from outside the school, and export information about the school (John 1980). Heads have to be receptive to new ideas themselves (Hoyle 1968). They have to balance and mediate differing expectations inside and outside the school and securing consensus generally

(Morgan and Hall 1982). Excessive attention to external commitments may isolate heads from staff (Matthew and Tong 1982). Other members of the senior management team, particularly a deputy does look inward; the deputy is the troubleshooter (Lyons 1974); and also takes on inservice work (Martin 1979).

In "Ten Good Schools" (DES 1977) effective headteachers are said to be sensitive to the expectations of parents. They are also mindful of the expectations of employers (DES 1981), LEA pressures (Peters 1976), the weight of administrative tasks (Ozga 1981) and unforeseen crises of administration (Bennett and Wilkie 1973). The legal establishment of their authority reinforces their position over the senior management team, internal organisation and discipline of the school. A head holds a central position in the promotion system and has the ability to make life difficult for the deviant (Bennett and Wilkie 1973). Because educational administration is a matter of human interaction in complex organisations, it cannot follow easy 'how to do it' paths. Schools are areas for negotiation where reality involves bargaining, exchange, influence and tactics. People are not passive, nor necessarily consensus-minded, or necessarily motivated by reward.

Heads reconcile opposing interests and views (DES 1979). Decision making in general is the concern of the headteacher (Dill 1964), but this is only a "euphemism for the allocation of resources - money, position, authority and so on" (Cohen cited by John 1980). Morgan and Turner (1976) mention leadership skills and list the activities of the classical management school : and Hoyle (1981) gives a similar list of frequently cited management functions. He claims that heads



need practical skills - timetable construction, planning a record system, organising the school office, establishing channels of two way communication and constructing a pattern of delegation.

Hughes (1975), Richardson (1975) and Morgan (1983) claim that the role of the head within the senior management team has changed over the years from autocrat to chief executive, a view which will be discussed later in this enquiry. Within the chief executive model are such internal tasks as the allocation of work; staff supervision, the insistence on deadlines and an emphasis on efficient procedures. External tasks include inviting visitors to the school, having access to the chairman of governors and being involved in the appointment of staff. As innovating/leading professional the headteacher takes on regular teaching and pastoral relationships.

As innovating/leading professional a head aims for openness to external professional influences, getting staff to try new ideas, personal study and involvement in educational activities outside the school (Hughes 1972). Heads' tasks may also be classified as individual and representative professional activities, and internal and external administrative activities (Hughes 1983).

The need for change in leadership style was highlighted by Morgan et al. (1983) who write:

"Heads in the 1980's cannot promote their policies without contest, or impose their values without debate, bargaining and compromise. Other social changes such as staff assertion, subject lobbies and the interests of ancillary staff must be taken into account. They are

influences which combine to modify the head's traditional role from that of determining policy to that of leading a policy forming process. In addition to the internal changes there are the external ones: more clearly defined powers of Governing Bodies, aid for parents; to have an account of the school policy and examination results; and more recently quite specific linking of the Secretary of State for Education of the head's effectiveness to overall school performance and productivity. For heads, then, the times have changed and they are no longer on a pedestal." (p11)

Jennings (1977) however comments that "it is nowhere defined or laid down what the head does". Heads themselves decide which task they will do and which they will delegate. Poster (1976) defines this as the heads determining their own "priorities of management". There does not appear to be a standard and agreed view on the nature of the role of the headteacher. This may be due to acknowledgement of the fact that the job is complex and that the holder has to carry out a multiplicity of roles.

Heads provide accountability to LEA and parents; and continuity for the long term since they personify the values of the school (Packwood 1981). Heads decide what they want to do; this may include teaching, public relations, timetabling, financial control, UCCA reports, consultation, delegation, monitoring, assessing qualities, information and leadership (Jennings 1977). Heads see important responsibilities as pastoral care, defining staff responsibilities, controlling appointments and using meetings for joint decision making; staff did not necessarily agree with these priorities (Hughes

1975). When conducting research amongst the headteachers in this study an attempt will be made to clarify their role in the 1990's.

#### 2.4:2 Other Members of the Senior Management Team

In schools priorities are, hopefully, clearly defined, and the development of pastoral care, academic success, staff development and school appraisal are priorities. The roles of senior management and headship may be broken down into vision, communication and housekeeping (Smith 1980). Taylor (1976) defines good management in terms of processes of consultation and decision making, relationships among LEA, governors, head and staff; maintenance of fabric and accounts; high morale of staff and pupils. This is not clearly related to educational outcomes.

The question of delegation of tasks by the head to other members of the senior management team also arises. A study by Weindling and Earley (1987) of the first years of headship in secondary schools investigates the 'senior management team' and found that team work was often unsatisfactory. Although heads favoured the team approach they did little to establish a real team ethos. Heads perceived many weaknesses in their deputies and said that "coping with a weak member of the senior management team" was one of the most difficult jobs they faced as managers. Most of the heads said that they "favoured a team approach to school management and where positive comments were made about the deputies they usually referred to how well they worked as a team in terms of joint planning and decision making" (p.64).

Delegation and full participation was limited; hence members of senior management were not fully functioning as collaborative teams

and team skills required development. Weak collaboration led to the development of exclusive teams within a school. As the senior management team began to gel as a team they became inward looking and further removed from other staff; exclusiveness in the senior management team generates exclusiveness in other teams within the school.

Torrington and Weightman (1990) have also addressed the role of senior management teams. The structure of senior management teams fell into three categories:

- (a) conventional - head and three deputies, but "the discrete duties of the three deputies often isolated them from each other and made team working less likely...." (p.119);
- (b) modified conventional - as above but with the addition of senior teachers who often had pastoral responsibilities or were heads of senior departments. This represented a wide range of opinion and avoided the formation of cliques although the group meetings often became a venue for the exchange of information only;
- (c) idiosyncratic - with very individual groupings.

Torrington and Weightman's analysis (1990) of senior management team meetings confirmed the findings of Weindling and Earley (1987) in identifying a wide and 'dramatic' variety of what was discussed there:

"We found several of the organic (that is, lively interaction as opposed to mechanical) meetings that relied on trust and mutual

esteem to get things done. We found other organic meetings where very little got done because everyone was lost. Equally the formal meeting with agendas, minutes and controlling chair, ranged from the efficient decision-making body to the cold robotic meeting where everyone was afraid to make a contribution. As one senior teacher said to us 'We sit with our diaries in one hand and knives in the other'" (Torrington and Weightman p.122).

The authors in their analysis of meetings concluded that such meetings are valuable for matters which cannot be dealt with elsewhere, such as coordinating and dealing with things which individual members of the senior management team cannot do on their own; for a clearing house function; to give a 'helicopter view' of a cross school matter; and where it is necessary to pool individual resources to decide on tactics, strategies and procedures for reacting to developments and stimulating initiatives and changes. According to Torrington and Weightman (1990) such formal meetings should not be used for 'tea and tattle' but for purposeful activity.

"The team is not just passing a job on, they are passing on - or passing back - a job with practical suggestions and ideas that other people can develop' (p. 124). From this evidence much remains to be done to ensure that this happens and that the senior management team functions effectively as a dynamic team.

During the course of the research I shall be observing senior management team meetings in the schools visited and it will be interesting to reflect upon the findings in the light of the above.



According to Burnham (1968) deputies and senior teachers just pass on decisions taken by others if their work is defined primarily as school organisation. However, minor technical or clerical duties perhaps ought not to be the responsibility of highly paid deputies or Grade E teachers. When deputies make decisions, administer and organise the school, they comply with their perceptions of the wishes of the head (Todd and Dennison 1978). Tasks appropriate for other members of the senior management team apart from the head are communicating knowledge and information and decisions about the curriculum and timetable; co-ordinating policies to establish common practice among teachers; dealing with tension between initiative, experiment and local development and the need for a common structure; co-ordinating administrative matters such as record keeping systems, reporting, interviewing, monitoring and recording progress and liaison with external agencies (Matthew and Tong 1982). One important aspect of senior management is helping staff to develop fully so that they can give their best (Frith 1985).

Teachers are not always favourable to an innovatory initiative by the head because it is a threat to their professional autonomy (Hughes 1975). Teachers may be considered "unco-operative" if they are intolerant of conventions which interfere with their freedom of action, imposed by members of senior management team who "know best" (Bennett and Wilkie 1973). Senior managers therefore need to be sensitive to the views of subordinates. Qualified staff do not expect to be assessed continually. If they receive greater support in their work there are better educational outcomes (Rutter 1979).

A key function of the headteacher is the determining of objectives for the school. This ensures co-ordination of effort (Barry and Tye 1972). The latter also claim that the evolution and implementation of an agreed policy have to be done with others. The values of the school should not be those of a single individual (Coulson 1976). The relationship between the timetable and curriculum values highlight the validity of shared common procedures and shared values (Martin, 1979). Other members of the senior management team also need organisational and philosophical foresight and vision (Matthew and Tong 1982). Clearly the senior manager is a major agent of change and responsible for providing a sense of direction (Everard 1984, Handy 1984, Dean 1985). Dennison (1985) writes of the almost impossible task confronting educational leaders at present due to the growing complexity of the task.

This research therefore will attempt to map out the characteristics of the senior management team, particularly the relationship between the headteacher and other members of the team, and their role with respect to change and the increasingly complex tasks confronting them.

## 2:5 Towards an Understanding of Secondary School Senior Management

Webb and Lyons (1982), in accordance with Mintzberg's views suggests that the chief executive concentrates on external roles, while second tier managers concentrate on internal roles. Most of the total administrative time of senior staff is spent on routine contact with others and they find limited evidence of development of team-working.

Hall et al (1986) conclude from their study of fifteen heads that the

job of headship is highly complex. If heads conformed to the management theory propounded by Mintzberg (1973), they would not have a high level of contact with pupils or with the generic professional activity (teaching). Headship may not be a "top management" position as understood in industry, or as professed by some heads. Although the head's working day is fragmented in activity, is people-intensive and covers a range of tasks, it differs from class teaching which is a long sustained activity. Little time is spent in scheduled meetings and most activity is interpersonal.

Tasks are categorised as : teaching; figurehead /ceremonial; educational policy and curricular matters; operations management and routine administration; human management and external management. Routine administration takes up far more time than more strategic management. Teaching, scheduled meetings and being out of school restrict the head's availability.

Heads try to provide professional leadership (including guiding teachers in what and how they teach; in how they handle aspects of pupil welfare; disciplining teachers; and monitoring staff). Heads also encourage staff development (including selection, induction, promotion and training), here defined in terms of counselling, extended work experience and the provision of advice and references. There was a great variation in the amount of time that heads spent with pupils and on teaching. Strategies differ for discipline and pastoral care. Heads clearly give administrative and financial work importance, because they spend much time on it; and attend to it in person. Some heads take work home; others do not. Administrative work falls into three categories : the post, finance and other

administrative tasks. Some heads delegate day to day spending to a bursar; some consult widely about financial decisions and make them on a basis of equity.

Lyons diary data indicates a duplication of activities and little differentiation of function at senior levels. If middle management staff were trained to undertake some of the functions of senior management, senior staff could become more orientated towards long term decision making and to more creative approaches to curriculum and staff development. Their influence over colleagues could be educative and creative rather than at the level of elementary personal problem solving (Webb and Lyons 1982).

Alongside the apparently elementary activities and skills, there are deeper and more fundamental processes. These may involve the creation and maintenance of a network of understanding, information and relationships, monitoring the ethos of the school, assessing the effectiveness of the staff and monitoring events inside the school. Webb and Lyons adapted the Mintzberg model to educational organisations and applied it to the data from Lyons 1974 study. They produced a model with various tasks which they found could be associated with interpersonal, informational and decisional roles. The findings of Webb and Lyons provide various hypotheses which will be examined during this enquiry.

## 2:6 The Skills of School Managers

Webb and Lyons (1982) draw on the work of Mintzberg (1973) to formulate a number of skills which the headteacher, as leader of the

senior management team, needs to have. These are: bureaucratic and clerical, administrative, resources planning and strategical, leadership, counselling, negotiating, decision making, evaluatory and critical objectivity skills. The head needs to be open to external professional influences leading to educational change (Hughes, 1983). Hughes (1983) claims that the head has to be able to work with and through people, in particular exercising leadership, influencing, communicating and maintaining morale. Other skills needed have to do with advertising and interviewing when choosing staff, defining roles, managing and delegating to others effectively. Some issues such as legal matters, finance and the working of the LEA (all technical and factual areas) suggested a need for specific instruction (Hughes 1983).

Senior managers in schools need unique skills which are only fortuitously developed during their previous career. One is the resolution of conflict and ambiguity. Another is the capacity to communicate effectively with non-teachers who have potentially different views of reality. (Morgan et al 1983). Finding no published research in England about specific requirements for headship Morgan et al propose sets of abilities which all heads should possess.

Six skills can be assessed. Heads ought to be able to gather and assess relevant data and come to generally acceptable conclusions. They ought to be able to "plan, organise, schedule, co-ordinate, control, evaluate so as to formulate, determine and implement all aspects of necessary policy." They ought to be able to influence and structure the activities of others in the formulation and determination of policy, solving problems and implementing decisions

for the most productive outcome. They ought to be able to "sense the reactions, needs and personal problems" of others, and communicate effectively especially when resolving conflict. They ought to be able to communicate effectively orally and in writing to different audiences; pupils, teachers, parents and the public (Morgan et al 1983).

Head teachers felt poorly prepared in a number of areas (Weindling and Earley 1987).

"The most frequently mentioned in order of occurrence were: finance; the experience of becoming a head (being in the "hot seat" and fully comprehending that "the buck stops here"); obtaining knowledge of the LEA procedures and finding out "who does what"; and staff management (including staff development, appointments and dealing with incompetent staff)."

Teachers hold certain expectations of those in the senior management team. They want them to be strong and consistent in professional support, able to get things done or decided, and to win resources for the work of the school. They also want them to solve individual problems (Webb and Lyons 1982).

Heads have difficulty with certain tasks which require specific skills: getting teachers to introduce new perspectives, improving performance of inexperienced teachers, helping teachers with discipline problems, making assembly a worthwhile experience and getting favourable publicity for the school (Peters 1976). Three of

these five tasks have to do with leadership in the sense of a working relationship between the headteacher and the teachers.

## 2:7 Training Provision

A feature of international research into school management in the early eighties focused not only on the role of the principal but also in the provision of training to increase effectiveness (Gordon 1984). Surveying a south east state in America, Lyons (1981) found that principals believed that thirty-one out of forty-four competencies could best be acquired through in-post experience, three during internship and ten during pre-service coursework. Previous research had found that pre-service training had neglected important areas such as programme evaluation, programme development, school/community communications, time management and human relations skills.

In Britain this led to an increased awareness of the concept of school management and the development of school management training.

In 1972 Glatter argued for the establishment of development centres for education management. Briefly, he proposed that the centres would have five main functions. These would be research into administrative processes and problems in education; an examination of the applicability to educational organisations of non-education sector management systems and techniques; the development of effective training methods; the dissemination of research findings and training materials; direct promotion of a limited number of courses, workshops and other training activities. Five years later a document from the DES indicated "the continuing need for the training

of senior teachers and headteachers for the complex tasks of school organisation and management" (DES 1977).

In 1981, the University of Birmingham obtained a research grant "to obtain a clearer picture of provision" (of education management training) "and thereby to have a firmer basis for policy making by central and local government in relation to future provision" (Hughes and Fidler 1981).

The research found great variety and some confusion in this area. Courses ranged from one day workshops on specific issues such as timetabling to long courses over a period of weeks or months aiming at a wider coverage of problems and issues. One of the most noticeable features was the fact that some LEA's and schools had difficulty in stating precisely what had taken place under their jurisdiction in the previous year. The Hughes report concluded by proposing a national initiative. This was an agency described in the report as the School Management Unit. It would provide "support and assistance, as required to existing professional development and help create new cooperative patterns of professional development provision" (Hughes 1981). There was a need for a structured programme of award bearing courses stimulating and relevant to practice, and also short courses of more immediate relevance focussed on particular topics or skill requirements. It was only exceptional courses that had strong practitioner involvement in determining content and mode of working with course related activity undertaken in the participants own school.



Within fifteen months of the Hughes Report the DES had taken the initiative to advance education management nationally. DES circular 3/83 established education management training courses. These one term training opportunities (OTTO) were for headteachers of considerable experience. After their training programme they would be expected to contribute to LEA and regional management training and development.

From September 1983 the funding of a DES project under the title of the National Development Centre for School Management Training (NDC) was established at Bristol University and directed by Dr. Ray Bolam. Their research during 1984/85 concluded that while management theory is important, its purpose in training is to shed light on the solution of the management problems being encountered in the schools and LEA's. The latter must have a coherent management development strategy as the context for the management training being provided. The NDC has attempted to disseminate its findings as it has proceeded. Their main concern was to ensure that the need for management development be accepted and understood by those responsible for the education service, and that resources to make it possible are made available.

The reluctance to recognize that there is anything to be learned by educationalists from the management of industry and commerce led to major research in 1985 by Everard and Marsden. They stressed the value of shared experience.

"Industry and education are not only interdependent in an economic sense, they also have a common problem which they can help to resolve

through their mutual co-operation.....If industry and education are able to bring about the necessary developments in their respective areas to provide for the needs of a rapidly changing world, good public relations are essential. Industry has much to gain by enabling schools to give a better understanding of its activities to the country's future producers, consumers and citizens. Similarly schools, by encouraging the involvement of industry, can also gain much needed understanding and support for what they are trying to do." (Everard and Marsden 1985)

On the management of change they say:-

"In the past, education management courses have mainly focused on 'administration', or the management of the status quo, but as society becomes more turbulent, managers are increasingly expected to steer their organisations towards new goals. The capacity for managing change is less well developed than it is in parts of industry which have faced the need for major reconstruction as a result of market changes."

Research the following year by Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1986) highlighted the inadequacy of not only the selection procedures for headteachers but also of training for seniority and leadership in the teaching profession.

Weindling and Earley (1987) surveyed headteachers about past training and future needs. Most thought that job experience and management courses had both given them sound preparation. The most important stage in their career is that of deputy head. However, the knowledge

and experience gained there is largely controlled by their previous heads. Working as part of a senior management team was invaluable because it involved them in discussion and decision making across all school activities. Job rotation every few years gave deputies experience of difficult aspects of management: of these, attendance at governors meetings, being involved in staff appointments and interviews and access to details of capitation were particularly invaluable experiences. A period of 'acting head' also provided valuable preparation.

Both headteachers and LEA officers thought that attendance at various management courses was an important aspect of preparation for headship. In general, courses attended prior to appointment were thought to be more useful than those afterwards. Participation on courses is inherently interesting and generally broadening, but it has not been established precisely how much is transferred back into schools (Weindling and Farley 1987). In order to improve preparation some headteachers suggested short periods of secondment to industry and commerce; attachments to experienced heads in other schools; visits to other schools to cut down "insularity and isolation"; and periods of "shadowing" a head for a day. Most headteachers felt that they needed release time to meet staff and get to know the new school before taking up appointment.

New headteachers thought that the most useful advice came from other heads, especially from informally arranged regular meetings of groups of about six to eight heads discussing various educational topics. A formal link between a new and experienced headteacher was thought to be useful; however at the time only 14% of authorities organised such

a link. Although most new heads wanted further opportunities to attend management courses, they were reluctant to leave the school during the first year.

Experience and management training can develop skills and knowledge, but it is hard to change personal qualities, although counselling can improve self knowledge. Good selection procedures are important to secure candidates with appropriate personal qualities (Birchenough 1986).

Schools are experiencing many changes, all of which need managing. There is a need for general management training which would include the management of change, embracing diagnostic evaluation and development strategies at the levels of the individual and the organisation. There is also a need for training about specific innovations. Both of these need to make greater use of learning through experience (Bolam 1986).

Following the introduction of LMS the latest research now emphasizes senior management team development and training. Headteachers are perhaps realising that they may be highly vulnerable if they remain in splendid isolation at the apex of a hierarchical pyramid.

The School Management Task force (1990) emphasized that the training of heads should not be conceived in isolation from the training of deputies and other members of the senior management team, either on management courses or within the school. The senior management team trained for their present and not for hypothetical future responsibilities will have the opportunity to exercise the whole

range of management skills and thus experientially be trained for headship.

"We have recommended a school-based approach to management development because it makes best use of on-the-job experience and the support of colleagues. There is a case for development activities specifically targeted at the needs of heads, but they must not lead to the creation of a separate managerial cadre. School management requires a team approach, with the head reliant on the specialist expertise of colleagues." (School Management Task Force 1990)

Having listed some of the very substantial changes being required of state maintained schools at the time they concluded the preface to their report with: "It is our hope that those who determine policies in these matters will actively consider their impact on school management. Failure to do so will result in energetic, able and dedicated professionals becoming disillusioned, exhausted and unable to provide the environment for learning that a generation of children and their parents might reasonably expect." (School Management Task Force 1990)

The Educational Assessment Centre (EAC) project started in September 1990 and based in Oxford is working with twenty-eight clients from the maintained and independent school sectors in England, Wales and Scotland. It is an important and ambitious attempt to provide senior staff with a detailed diagnostic profile for further professional development based on twelve generic management competencies. The initial aim of the EAC project is to improve the management

competencies of future headteachers so that they will be effective managers as well as successful educators. The pilot phase of the project (1990-92) is supported by a four way partnership between SHA (the profession), Oxford Polytechnic (higher education), British Telecom, the Post Office, Rover and ICL (Industry) and the Department of Employment and Education (Government). It is hoped that the partnership will continue to sustain the extension phase of the EAC project from 1992 onwards.

The most recent research at the NDC to examine how senior management teams manage secondary schools within a context of educational reform was begun in January 1991. The rationale is the advocated view that leadership in secondary schools should be shared. Such research as has been conducted suggests that while many headteachers and senior staff perceive themselves to work as a team, there is wide variation in the composition and practice of senior management teams. Moreover the programme of education reforms, currently being introduced by central government, requires schools to introduce, more or less simultaneously, several major innovations. Therefore there is a growing body of opinion that senior managers in secondary schools face a greater need than hitherto to coordinate their work so as effectively to orchestrate the implementation of multiple innovations. According to Riches (1992) this does not happen automatically; training is needed to prepare for such tasks and to make the performance of them effective. It will be interesting to see whether the findings of this research confirm that view.

## 2:8 Discussion of the Literature Review

According to Burnham (1969) and Bush (1981) leadership theory provides various dimensions on each of which the behaviour of a secondary school senior manager may be located. However leadership theory has been criticised in that there may be considerable differences between schools within the same system; and what may work well in one may fail completely in another. This surely depends on the experience, personalities and expectations of the staff and of the head and other members of the senior management team, and on how others react to the latter; and indeed on external factors. It seems that leadership theories are useful therefore when considering a single institution in relation to others; or a leadership style in one institution compared with another.

Role theory seems to operate on three distinct levels. Firstly there is a universal role for each occupation which all role holders inevitably fulfil. Secondly the occupation is defined by Mintzberg (1973) as a series of actions; these effectively form a series of sub-roles or functions of the occupational role. Thirdly the performance of a role may be completely idiosyncratic, and influenced by the actor's personality, experience and other roles.

In practice, virtually nobody behaves as the first level of role theory ordains. There are always modifications derived from personal factors, from other roles held, or from particular institutional circumstances. The third level of role theory appears to be useful in terms of explaining the behaviour of individuals: they are really the embodiment of a large number of different roles, and therefore

their behaviour in any one of them will in part be determined by the other roles, past and present. The way that people actually behave within a given role is idiosyncratic, and in order to approach the occupational role, the other layers of behaviour derived from other roles have to be stripped away. In real life the performance of different roles played by a single person cannot be easily disentangled, and it is difficult to know to which role to attribute any particular action (Hargreaves 1972). In other words role theory can provide a highly theoretical prescription of what a secondary school senior manager (as role holder) ought to do. It can also provide an insight into the role at a highly practical level, where the performance of a single actor is shaped by many external factors. However this study is not concerned with the individual nor with totally abstract generality.

Mintzberg's intermediate concept of "roles" seems helpful. A role is to be understood as an occupation which can be subdivided into functions, such as figurehead and leader; these in turn are defined in terms of tasks - that is, what the senior manager actually does.

The quality of the performance of these tasks depends upon such individual factors as experience, skills and personality. These shape how the task is performed. What one actually sees therefore, when a role is being performed are the tasks that make up the functions attributable to the occupational role, but modified by the skills, experience and personality of the role holder, and by the institutional context.

Expectations help the role actors to choose which tasks are going to receive the greatest amount of their time and attention, and those



expectations will be determined largely by the importance that the actors give to the various members of their role set. The amount of urgent attention given to the tasks will depend on the importance of the various influencers. Of the other modifying factors, skills can be gained deliberately by learning or acquired fortuitously. Experience may be deliberately provided by others during the course of the senior manager's previous career as a teacher; or it may be sought out deliberately by the prospective senior manager. It may appear in the form of training. Personality however is something that develops and is hard to modify in a grown adult and yet the implication is that this is the most important factor in the identification of prospective senior managers.

Training for headship/senior management has developed over several stages, which seem to be cumulative. The first was based on simple practical experience, which was supposed to lead to a "general" understanding, and from there to a practical understanding within a given school context. The next stage extended this process to the use of courses about administrative techniques and general management theory. The last stage was, additionally, to base the acquisition of practical understanding within the trainees' own institution. If institutional circumstances do not differ significantly from one school or another, or if headteachers lack the power to take their own initiatives within their own school, then the last stage becomes largely irrelevant.

Mintzberg's model presents managers establishing personal contacts which they use to gather information, much of which triggers off decisions within the organisation. The key element here is the

information which effectively allows the manager to identify problems and convert them into opportunities. This model has been adopted for English schools by Webb and Lyons and provides various hypotheses which may be examined during the course of the research.

The task of managing schools is now far more complex and demanding than it has ever been and the degree of difficulty seems to be increasing at an ever growing rate. Thus the job of the senior management team has radically changed, though the headteacher still remains uniquely responsible and accountable. Changes in society have affected the role of the headteachers and how they perceive their job. This is succinctly summed up in 'Better Schools' (DES 1985) :

"What is expected of schools alters over time with change in society and in national circumstances. Two trends in particular can be identified since the Education Act 1944 came into force. First, economic, social and demographic changes have profoundly altered the circumstances under which schools have to do their work. British society has become more complex and diverse; values and institutions are increasingly called into question; the pace of technological change has quickened; unemployment has added to the pressures of daily life which has become more precarious and sometimes more turbulent.

Second, the schools have been expected to expand the range of their tasks; as a result of the transformation of their material and moral environment. They have had to cope with conflicting views about how their task should alter. There has been neither clarity of agreement

about priorities among the many aims they set for themselves and those which others set for them."

It is thus apparent that a school is a complex organisation which requires highly developed management and leadership skills from both the headteacher and other members of the senior management team if the institution is to deal effectively with the changing needs of society. A review of the literature in this study suggested that there has been a distinct shift in the role of the headteacher "from a complete autocrat to chief executive" (Hughes 1975).

Following the growing internal and external demands upon the institution the model of the head as the "professional administrator" emerged (Hughes 1975). When this was conceptualized by Hughes he proposed a dual role model when the "chief executive" of the professionally staffed organisation may also be considered to be the "leading professional." Whatever the role model developed by the theorists the reality is that headteachers have to adapt to the increased internal and external demands on the school with its consequent potential role conflict. The point is reiterated by Hughes (1975):

"It has to be recognised that our role models are but abstractions, which only partly reflect the reality. In seeking to develop a more unified role model it is therefore salutary to recall that many heads to a great extent, succeed in simultaneously activating and integrating the contrasting and potentially conflicting aspects of their total role." (p.59)

Certainly a review of the literature on the role of headteachers within the senior management team indicates the vagueness of the research findings concerning their role and when conducting research among the headteachers in this study an attempt will be made to clarify their role within the senior management team.

THE ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS  
IN SECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

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3:1: Introduction

I have been a member of a senior management team for seven years and during that period the demands on senior management have greatly increased. The research therefore is a response to both the changing nature and role of senior management and the need for recommendations for future INSET of senior management teams.

As the review of the literature on the role of senior management in secondary schools indicated there is considerable scope for further studies on this subject. Throughout this study great importance is placed on what headteachers and other members of the senior management team say about the issues raised with a fellow colleague in the knowledge of anonymity and confidentiality.

It will be the responsibility of others as well as the researcher to reflect on the responses if developments are to be made which contribute to improving the overall effectiveness of our education system.

3:1:1 Senior Management Team: Definition

At the outset of the research it became apparent that in order to analyse responses a definition of senior management had to be arrived at. An opportunity sample of approximately fifteen headteachers was telephoned. There appears to be general consensus that the separation between senior and middle management occurs below Senior

Teacher (Grade E) level. In the light of the boundaries determined by the telephone survey all future inferences to senior management will be made on this definition.

### 3:1:2 Administration

All headteachers, deputies and senior teachers in the research project were sent a letter with the research proposal enclosed and requesting an interview. Following the letter a phone call arranged an appointment for an introductory visit to each of the four schools and formal interview times were arranged during those visits.

### 3:1:3 Establishing a Focus of Study

As outlined in chapter one I have been a member of a senior management team for seven years and during that period the demands on senior managers have greatly increased. My concern was to examine the work undertaken and the needs of serving senior managers in order to provide a basis for a future development programme. Much of the literature about the work of secondary school heads and deputies has its roots in the work of industrial management. A survey of the literature provided a list of tasks which heads and deputies perform and which could be grouped under broad headings following the categorisation of Morgan and Hall (1982). The data of Weindling and Earley (1987) focused on perceptions of their training and experience, their early difficulties and some of the ways in which help was provided. A series of questions were drafted to elicit information about their tasks and to pick out those issues which brought about anxiety amongst members of the senior management team.

Attempts were made to identify those skills which underpin their performance and those where assistance and support would be welcome in their acquisition thereof.

### 3:2 Case Studies

At the outset I considered the most suitable way of achieving the following objectives of the research:

(a) To examine the current roles of senior management in secondary schools with special reference to clarifying the function of the head teacher.

(b) To consider the changing nature of senior management following recent legislation.

(c) To investigate ways in which members of senior management teams can be prepared for the responsibilities undertaken within that team.

This led me to consider the 'case study' method of collecting data, directly observing and interviewing headteachers and members of the senior management team and then determining if there was anything in common in what they said. A case study approach might produce material that could be adapted to train senior managers and be part of a structured INSET programme. This was preferred to a questionnaire which people frequently resist and where the researcher cannot be sure how people are interpreting the questions. Moreover questionnaires tend to set the agenda and make it difficult to really discover what people think and what is important to them. On the



other hand case studies would highlight issues for senior management teams and thereby offer a learning or discussion vehicle; consequently four schools or 'cases' were be chosen.

Case studies are flexible allowing the researcher to reformulate the problem as the data accumulates. However, I was aware that critics (Kitwood 1980, Walker 1985) point out a number of factors in case studies which raise doubts on methodology - generalization, reliability and validity.

With regard to generalizations, I had an expectation at the beginning of this study in respect of the needs of senior management teams (although I was prepared for these to change in response to the data collected.) These perceptions were grounded in the experience of working in such a team for seven years and in conversations with senior managers in schools. Was it possible to collect the data systematically and to generalise from a collection of four case studies? To the natural scientist reliability raises the issue of replicability - another researcher studying the same phenomena would produce the same results.

Educational situations according to Walker (1985) are difficult to replicate. Different researchers will proceed in different ways and no two researchers will perceive the same phenomena exactly the same way. 'Reliability' is sometimes argued by the case study researcher as being "a recognition of familiarity" by the reader of the case study. It is often claimed that case studies suffer from being impressionistic, idiosyncratic, highly subjective and biased. How accurate and authentic is the data collected? It should be

appreciated that although 'meaning' is always context dependent, various interpretations may be construed from the same set of circumstances through the use of different individual background knowledge. One of the techniques which were adopted to "safeguard against the researchers fantasy" (Kitwood, 1980) was to discuss with headteachers and other members of the senior management team following the interviews some common issues that they had raised. When I shared informally with them some of the findings they identified with the statement and saw the 'stark reality'. This is what Walker (1985) describes as "face validity".

On the other hand one must consider whether it is methodologically and ethically right to make use of information supplied in conversation; if this information cannot be checked out it would lead to a bias in the data.

Sceptics ask 'Is not collection, analysis and reporting of data entirely at the discretion of the research?' Behind such questions lies a basic but incorrect assumption, that forms of research exist which are immune from prejudice, researcher bias and human error. This is not so. Any research study requires skilled human judgements and is thus vulnerable. A technique by which the validity of the data can be assessed is triangulation. I became aware that while the thesis would be produced using data generated from in-depth interviews, informal conversation and periods of observation in the four schools, a key issue for further study would emerge, namely seeking ways to triangulate the data.

### 3:3 The Selection of the Sample Schools

The case studies were not all selected from one authority. My reservation was that any single authority might have developed a distinctive management style which could affect the way the senior management teams managed schools. Some LEA's might adopt a reactive style of management, others a non-interventionist style allowing the senior management team a great deal autonomy. Whatever style is adopted might influence the behaviour of the headteacher or other members of the senior management. In order to eradicate this possible bias I decided that while all the sample schools would have a mixed comprehensive intake and be under LMS, they would be in three authorities and also be a mixture of urban and rural schools. In addition, the researcher to avoid any preconceived judgements on his part, selected schools outside the LEA by whom he was employed.

During the first visit to each of the sample schools in order to meet the headteacher and other members of the senior management team, the researcher provided an explanation of the background of this research proposal and thanked all concerned for the positive reception so far received. Frequently the question arose 'What can we get out of the research?' To this the researcher replied "I would hope that I might cause you to think about your work and role..... I may be able to give you feedback of a general nature at the conclusion of the work bearing in mind..... the promise given about confidentiality and anonymity." The researcher stressed that he hoped the research would have a practical use, assisting the process of INSET and the professional development of senior management teams generally.

### 3:4 The Interviews

Personal, sensitive and revealing information is often difficult to obtain from respondents and it can also be difficult to obtain complete answers to indirect, non-specific questions that represent probes. Using a questionnaire, all the questions must be decided in advance, and all the respondents will receive the same questions. In contrast, the great advantage of the interview as a method of gathering data lies in the flexibility of approach it permits. The interview gives exceptionally good value in terms of detailed data both on behaviour and attitudes underlying behaviour. The interviewer is able to explain the purpose of the study, can ensure that the interviewee fully understands a question, can add clarifying remarks and can encourage the interviewee if they appear to lack confidence. The interviewee's reaction to questions can add an important dimension to the data collected. Indeed as the Newsons conclude:

"Interviewing in the end was the only technique which allowed free run to the respondent, which had both subtlety and flexibility, and which could bring out the detail and variety, the reservations and the ambiguities" (Newson and Newson 1976 p.31)

Hence, the interview becomes the principal means of gathering information, but may be used in conjunction with other methods, and may be used to test hypotheses or suggest new ones. An interview with fixed alternative items gives greater uniformity of measurement; open-ended items give greater depth. Direct specific questions may

make the respondent more guarded; non-specific questions may cause less alarm. Questions may seek factual information or opinion.

The first task of the researcher is to develop a role within the organisation and empathy with the subjects (Walker 1985). The status of the researcher is constantly redefined: from newcomer, to accepted, to imminent migrant. There may be strain in maintaining the relationships, especially problems of fatigue; a break from the field may restore a sense of direction (Walker 1985) and enable the researcher to maintain a perspective.

There is more than one way of posing a question (Macdonald 1981). There may be the devil's advocate question. A hypothetical question may be used to sound out one's thought structure. Posing the ideal, one can point out the shortcomings of reality. Offering interpretations or testing propositions on respondents is a kind of progress report and brings out new information. It is helpful to record more than appears to be necessary because there may be a change of direction in the work. As a set of major hypotheses becomes settled, irrelevant facts can be omitted.

The researcher was aware that safeguards would be needed against potentially invalidating or contaminating factors, such as reactive effects of the observer's presence; the distorting effects of selective perception and interpretation on the observer's part; and limitations of the observer's ability to witness all relevant aspects (McCall and Simmons 1969). The latter warn that data will be determined by the social position of the observer and his/her

interpretation will be conditioned by his/her theoretical preconceptions.

Powney and Watts (1987) ask how it is possible to know whether the informant is telling the truth. It was necessary to watch out for the informant's report of subjective data and also be aware that the interview can be prone to bias. Non-verbal clues are also important; there may be conflict between some of these. Data is highly situational and the researcher recognised the need to watch out for ulterior motives such as a desire to please the interviewer. Reporting of "objective" data can be checked against implausibility, the unreliability of the informant and comparison with accounts of other informants. Argyris (1975) suggests anxiety may occur due to uncertainty about the purpose of the interview, a feeling of an authoritarian relationship, a close identification with the organisations leadership or the high academic status of the researcher.

Interviewers should be conscious of not giving indications of their views by facial expressions or tone of voice, and the interview may be 'bounced' along with neutral grunts. Furthermore the researcher realising his close relationship with schools, and desiring his research data to be 'objective', used his professional experience as a means of helping interviewees to elucidate their views whilst maintaining naivety towards the subject matter being shared. Lacey had a similar experience when he observed that:

"My biases could perhaps lead to omission, but this could hardly lead to me constructing an account based simply on my prejudices." (Lacey 1976 p. 67)

Cautious and diplomatic responses were required for such comments as "Is this the sort of thing you're looking for?", at the end, and even during the interview. Of course it is impossible to play no role at all, for all roles involve a particular perspective on the world around us. Indeed bias is a constant threat to all social research. However wherever possible the interviews were conducted by means of the subject responding in their own way to the questions put before them and the interviewer only interjected when clarification was needed or to advance the interview.

In deciding the method of interview to be used in the research I was aware of four types:-

- 1) Structured interviews where the content and procedures are organised in advance.
- 2) Unstructured interviews which form an open-ended situation, having greater flexibility and freedom in determining sequence and wording of questions.
- 3) The non-directive interview which is based upon the therapeutic interview stemming from the work of Carl Rogers.
- 4) The focused interview which introduces more interview control in the non-directive situation.

The original intention was that non-directive interviewing would enable individuals to talk freely about senior management. From this I assumed that the perceived needs of senior managers would naturally emerge.

The non-directive style of interviewing was found to be inadequate during the field trial. It was too open ended in approach and it proved difficult to centre the conversation on areas deemed relevant to the research. It was also time demanding both on the interview length and the processing of the transcript. It also presented a mass of material which was vague and peripheral to the study. Consequently the researcher eventually adopted the focused non-directive approach, a methodology developed by Merton and Kendall (1946).

Merton and Kendall (1946) reported on a programme which followed non-directive principles, but introduced interview control in limiting the respondent to certain areas of discussion:

"Fore knowledge of the situation obviously reduces the task confronting the investigator since the interview need not be devoted to discovering the objective nature of the situation. Equipped in advance with the content analysis the interviewer can readily distinguish the objective facts of the case from subjective definitions of the situation. The interviewer thus becomes alert to the whole field of selective response." (p.549)

Hence the distinctive feature of the focused interview is the prior analysis by the researcher of the situations in which interviewees



have been involved. In the follow up discussions after the observation of senior management team meetings, quotations were extracted from the interviews which were common to the majority of senior management team members. These quotations written on paper were presented to senior management team members and used to stimulate comment, interpretation and criticism. As Merton and Kendall explain:

"In the focused interview, the interviewer can, when expedient, play a more active role; he can introduce more explicit verbal cues to the stimulus pattern." (Merton and Kendall 1946 p.556)

In these interviews, although the interviewer has a general idea or model in mind and engages the interviewee in discussion with it, it is not made explicit to the interviewee by any imposed structure. Throughout the interview the interviewer has to develop the ability to evaluate the data continuously while the interview is in progress.

Through my experience of senior management and deputy headship I was able to use non-directive focused interviewing as a means of limiting areas of discussion. Because of familiarity with the objective situation, I could recognize symbolic or functional silences, distortions, avoidance or blocking and was prepared to explore their implications. My approach aimed at "developing rapport and eliciting information" (Spradley 1979).

The researcher did not experience some of the usual problems associated with interview research methods. This was no doubt due to the fact that both the interviewer and interviewee were experienced

senior managers and empathy and rapport were easily established after the initial apprehension. The interviews presented a forum in which interviewees were able to concentrate their minds on aspects of their work and have an opportunity to analyse their behavioural patterns. With the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity individuals imparted a great deal of confidential data which would probably not have been possible to obtain by questionnaire.

It appeared that many deputies and senior teachers were pleased to talk to someone outside their own school, in a non-threatening situation. Here was someone (the researcher) taking an interest in them and listening to their experience - sometimes problems - that could not be voiced easily to other colleagues in their institution.

However, I did appreciate that being an 'insider' and close to the interviewees' own situation could also have disadvantages. The fact that the inquiry becomes almost a "family affair" (Powney and Watts 1987) with people who are known personally or by reputation to the researcher could affect the data and the data gathering process. A researcher who is part of the normal scene is more likely to be biased and to pick up discrepancies between the information given during the formal interview and that collected or observed before and after. Moreover if the interviewees know that the researcher is familiar with an event or experience which is the subject of the interview, they will be somewhat puzzled if the researcher feigns ignorance for research purposes. It would be too pedantic and stilted in this situation for the researcher to require a detailed explanation of an experience which is well known to all participants through their common membership. A further problem lies in the fact

that 'insiders' may use data to fit their own pre-existing categories and theories. Logan (1984) argues that as research interviewers we need "constant self monitoring to reveal to what extent we are still guilty of importing into and imposing our categories on to interviewees".

A total of twenty-nine interviews were held in the schools (including the school used to pilot the research). The researcher allocated 1 - 1 hour 15 minutes for every interview which included:

- a) Time to put the interviewee at ease; to ensure that the purpose of the interview was understood and to give reassurance of confidentiality and anonymity.
- b) Fifty minutes taped interview.
- c) A short session at the conclusion of the interview when interviewees might make additional un-taped comments on their work.

Throughout the interviews, interviewees sometimes paused to ask "what else do you want to know?" These are natural questions in the circumstances and the standard answer given was "whatever else you may wish to tell me." When interviewees claimed that they had nothing further to share, a summary of what had been said to date frequently triggered off the interviewee into giving further details about areas already covered but in greater depth. By pausing and causing the interviewee to think was another method of generating a

flow of data, or sometimes this was achieved by repeating the last phrase used by the interviewee.

At the conclusion of the taped sessions, the after-thoughts of heads, deputies and senior teachers were noted in the field work diary. These comments were often of a strictly confidential nature, involving working relationships with colleagues. The experience of gaining this further data highlighted the potential of the ongoing nature of the study, enabling the researcher to gather critical data when the interviewee and interviewer had built up a rapport.

There were a number of possibilities from which to choose a method of recording interview data, but in fact these possibilities were limited by the chosen style of interview technique used in the study. It would have been possible to take written notes during the actual interview, but this could affect the nature of the relationship between interviewer and interviewee. It could also inhibit the thought processes of the interviewer if notes had to be written during the interview. In addition facial expressions and gesticulation of interviewees could go unnoticed whilst the interviewer was engaged in writing; hence the tape recorder was considered to be the best method of recording data and by the use of this the notebook was "got rid of" (MacDonald 1981).

### 3:5 The Use of the Tape Recorder

The use of this machine permitted the interviewer to be free from the necessity of writing out the interviewee's response during the interview and allowed him to concentrate upon aspects of the person's

behaviour. Tape recording provided a complete and accurate record of the entire interview. It also preserved the emotional and vocal character of the replies, and the errors that are sometimes made in written records are avoided. However, the tape record was not a time saver, as transcribing was time consuming and analysis became far more complicated in proportion to the increase in the amount of data collected. Nevertheless this process added to the quality of the research. Far from finding the tape recorder an inhibitor to conversation, it was found to be a facilitator in the interview exchange, allowing the interviewer to give his mind to the relationship with the interviewee, to probing and using the flexibility of situations.

The success of the interview depended largely on the sensitivity shown by the interviewer. The co-operation and confidence of the interviewee must be gained, and an initial period of time spent talking about a topic of interest was found to be most helpful. By conveying an impression to the interviewees that they were in possession of data which no-one else could provide, and giving them the assurance that the information given would remain confidential, the conversation can flow freely. The experience of the researcher was similar to that of the Newson's "...it will be very difficult for the participants to discuss their own behaviour without expressing any attitude towards it." (Newson and Newson 1976 p.32).

Following the interviews I made brief jottings of salient points not mentioned on the tape when interviewees may have made additional comments on their work.

### 3:6 Principles Guiding the Evaluation of the Data

The nature of the research could have posed a difficult problem between researcher and those being researched. House's comments appear particularly significant: "Nobody wants to be evaluated by anybody at any time." (Howe 1973 in Simons 1985)

A senior management team might find it difficult in this context to develop a relationship of mutual trust and understanding with the researcher. In order to protect therefore those involved in the evaluation and being aware of the potentially problematical and threatening nature of it, I drew up, after reading Walker (1985) and MacDonald and Stake (1974) the following principles of procedure:

- a) The research would be carried out in a spirit of fairness, accuracy and sensitivity towards those involved.
- b) Schools and personnel within those schools in the study to be anonymised.
- c) The researcher is responsible for the confidentiality of any data collected.
- d) The research will present an independent evaluation. In order for this to be achieved no participant in the study will have access to the data of the evaluation. In addition the researcher will attempt to represent the range of viewpoints realised in the evaluation, rather than to express his own viewpoints.

These principles attempted to strike a balance between giving the participants some control - but not all - over the data. I tried to bear in mind MacDonald's (1974) emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between the researcher and researched, and the fact that MacDonald says, it does have consequences for those who participate.

Data collected from the interviews throughout the study was transcribed and analysed at the end of every individual session. To preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of all interviewees the following procedures were followed in analysing the data and in writing the thesis:

(i) Interviewees were given a number as on a school timetable master board.

(ii) Data was arranged by theme rather than by school.

(iii) Schools were identified by letter rather than by name.

Quotations and schools have not been identified and the order of presentation of data is not linked to the order of the interviews.

(iv) It is not in the bounds of this study to address the gender issue although reality is not an all male management team world.

### 3:7 Final Remarks on Methodology

In this research the emphasis in the presentation of the findings is on what headteachers, deputies, and senior teachers actually said.

Due to the free nature of the responses there is no doubt that they reflect the valid perceptions of those interviewed. Any contrasting views on any issues are stated. From the outset it was not assumed that the reflections would amount to anything representative or that could be generalized; they were more individual perceptions. In the event it would appear that certain of the findings which have resulted in recommendations have wider applicability across the whole range of secondary school senior management teams.



4:1 Introduction

The task of managing schools is now far more complex and demanding than it has ever been and the degree of difficulty appears to be increasing at an ever growing rate. Thus the job of the senior management team has radically changed, though the headteacher still remains uniquely responsible and accountable. The Times Educational Supplement on 29/9/89 commented:

"Being a head in 1989 is akin to competing in a marathon held high on a sand dune carrying a heavy load. As the race develops, the organisers reduce the number of feeding stations, increase the slope of the hill and move the winning posts."

Perhaps a somewhat depressing, even cynical, view. Nevertheless it expresses vividly the increasing and developing role which headteachers are expected to fulfil.

It was clear from the field trial and later the main work that in order to find out how headteachers perceived their role and their needs, it was essential to allow them to explore how they saw their job. The views expressed were unsolicited and the freedom with which they spoke was in no short measure due to the contract which agreed complete confidentiality and anonymity.

There was no doubt in the minds of the heads interviewed that the work of a headteacher has grown in complexity in recent years. They confirmed the point made in the literature review 'Better Schools'

(DES 1985) that changes in society have affected the role of the head and how the job is perceived..

However when conducting the research among the headteachers in this study there was common agreement amongst them that one of the main functions of their job was that of providing direction for the school.

#### 4:2:1 Providing a Sense of Direction

The need for "vision" to enable the potential of the school to be realized was emphasized by most headteachers. This "sense of vision" or "clear idea of what I want" came over quite strongly from headteachers supporting the view expressed by Manasse (1984):

"It is this organisational vision which is essential for effective leadership. The effective leader understands growth and the change in the system, has a vision of a better future and has the skills necessary to bring all the individuals and the subsystems into congruence so that they all work toward a common purpose." (p.46)

However one head had difficulty in stating his aims for the future and this lack of clarity in direction was perceived by the headteacher as confirming the need for headteacher training:

"My own sense of direction in the sense of the needs of the school is now less clear than a few years ago.. This is partly because of an alleged change by others in the needs of society for the future and because of a lack of training in me to update me to these new thoughts."

This expressed need for further training "of some kind" arose more than once throughout the interviews. One head appeared uncertain as to his specific role as he perceived the job had become more diffuse with time.

Buckley (1984) sums up the range of responses concerning a sense of direction in schools. He states that

- (a) most schools are being managed for today.
- (b) a number for yesterday
- (c) that some schools are being managed for tomorrow
- (d) and that very few are being managed for the day after tomorrow.

Why individuals lose their sense of direction is not easy to ascertain but it is not an uncommon feature amongst some headteachers. Some of the answers might be due to the inability to adjust to the complexity of the institution. Handy (1984) writes:

"Organisations that have one clear cut task are easy to run. Schools are not so fortunate. Success in education is elusive, hard to measure and maybe not too evident until many years have passed. Faced with blurred aims, conflicting functions and no simple means of measuring success, schools have a major management problem." (p20-21)

All headteachers who were interviewed saw their job as giving a sense of direction and also bringing about change.

It is apparent that individual headteachers see a need for the opportunity to regularly re-appraise the direction in which they should be leading the school. This is due to the multiple tasks

requiring completion and is a major management issue which cannot be avoided.

#### 4:2:2 Effecting Change within the School

Headteachers identified "bringing about change" as another important aspect of their job. However they all seemed conscious of the demands and difficulties they faced in this task.

There are many factors which have to come together if effective change is to take place in an organisation.

Dean (1985) writes:

"Ideally a school may aim at change by consensus where the staff feel that they can work together to change in ways they agree are desirable. The larger the school, the less likely that consensus will be achieved." (p.72)

The climate and the attitude has to be right.

"No organisation can be static and change must be managed so that it is effective. Change needs to be made when the climate and the attitudes are right..... whatever the source of change, and whatever the head's view of the change involved it is the task of management to manage it successfully." (Dean 1985 p.69)

Heads were aware of pacing themselves over change and that it was necessary to get a sense of perspective and curb any desire to change everything overnight. Virtually all headteachers interviewed claimed

that LMS had proved a change agent. One head stated that he was able to use this factor as the reason for reviewing existing practices:

"LMS was a lever for change to be able to bring about a restructuring of the school. It could not have reached the present state at this time without LMS."

However it was not the experience of all heads who took part in the interviews that LMS proved to be a change lever. For one head 'staff attitude' and 'how to change attitudes' is at the crux of bringing about major changes in schools.

It would appear from the views expressed by headteachers that bringing about change is a key responsibility of the task of headship. What was apparent to the researcher was that some headteachers would welcome guidance on 'handling change'. One head commented that "headteachers require ongoing support and training in bringing about the complex matter of institutional changes."

#### 4:2:3 Achieving Success for the School

Another characteristic which was identified was achieving success for the school. In order that this can be done then certain identifiable goals have to be set. The difficulty is identifying the criteria of success. Handy (1984) makes the point of the difficulty in defining any one criterion of success due to the multiple purpose of the school:

"Perhaps this is as it should be and more opportunity made of this apparent problem. If success had many faces it would allow schools to:-

1. Send every customer away satisfied.
2. Give ample reinforcement everywhere and not just for a few.
3. Live up to a departmental store picture that society wants rather than a speciality store, which society tends to perceive." (p.40)

One headteacher identified the attainment of academic goals as a means of achieving success. The need to succeed was certainly seen as a chief motivator by headteachers but they claimed that it was "not necessarily easy to achieve."

#### 4:2:4 The Head as Motivator, Enabler and Facilitator

When one attempts to analyse the managerial tasks of the head it can be seen that the job requires a width of technical or professional expertise in order to manage the educational task. Katz (1974) argues that all chief executive managerial roles embrace three major task categories - technical, conceptual and human relations. In this last category such areas as staff motivation, staff development, inter-personal and group-conflict resolution would be found. When conducting interviews headteachers tended to see their job as that of either the 'organisational dimension' or the 'personal dimension.' One head claimed "The task of the head is to weld people together into a team. This sounds an easy task to fulfil but in reality it can take a considerable length of time."

An effective leader is one who can bring together a group of people and unite them in working together for the common aim. Dean (1985) writes:

"Effectiveness may be defined more broadly in terms of ability to draw together a community of people in pursuit of common goals. It involves inspiring, stimulating, motivating, directing and influencing as well as providing an organisation which supports the work in hand. The effective leader draws together the parts of the organisation so that all contribute to the shared aims." (p.6)

Headteachers who saw their task as an 'enabler' saw it linked with that of motivation and facilitating development. A headteacher must "be around", "make things possible and implement policy" and be seen to be able to "deliver the goods".

Peters and Waterman (1983) end their review of excellent organisations as follows:-

"These institutions create environments in which people can blossom, develop self esteem and otherwise be excited participants in the organisation and in society as a whole."

This shift of emphasis in management style to that of shared partnership was commented on by one head who reflected as follows:-

"The CEO said about eight years ago that heads were the last outpost of autocracy. That has now changed."

However another headteacher felt that the "enabling" aspect of the job had not changed despite the growth of other demands.

"We are much more accountable, as parents are being encouraged to question what is going on. So it is accountability that has increased - but the job is the same as it was - it's as an enabler to enable education to continue in your school."

From the interviews conducted 'successful' heads appear to have long term vision for the school where they work but it is grounded in the reality of how to enable a group of people to achieve the overall aims in circumstances which are not always conducive to genuine participation.

#### 4.3 The Heads View of Themselves

All the headteachers were asked how they felt they influenced other members of the senior management team in the school. They generally felt that they did this by involving other members of the team as fully as possible in "planning and decision making", by discussing issues relating to school management openly and frankly so that the senior team operated as a single unit. Most heads said that they were "open about problems", and were keen to explore all the possibilities that might lead to the eventual solution to a problem. Heads generally felt that they influenced people by working with them and that they were less likely to use their position in terms of influence. One head stated "I have to take the decisions, but I think I rarely make any sort of decision without appropriate consultation." The experienced heads who had been in post for some time were the most assertive in terms of their influence within the senior team. One such head commented "The head makes the decisions and encourages a kind of democracy which isn't genuine."

Most of the headteachers felt that they were aware of their subordinates' feelings and only one expressed some reservations about this. Two said they were completely willing to confront subordinates



while one seemed less certain about this. Most heads said that they delegated as much as they possibly could but there was one headteacher, who wanted to keep as much control as possible as is confirmed by the previous quotation.

Most heads thought they could be influenced by their subordinates but again there was the one who seemed unwilling to be influenced by others. Most said that they defined and dealt with problems quickly and that they tended to avoid conflict if at all possible. Two heads were more inclined to confront problems and thereby get into conflict; these were the same two who were willing to confront subordinates. All the heads consider themselves open about their job and were willing to share problems with their subordinates and all, with one exception, felt they were able to listen with understanding and to take advice.

All heads interviewed were asked about the strengths they felt they personally brought to the senior team and the responses to some extent were similar. In most cases reference was made to "experience", "a logical mind and high degree of administrative ability", "perception and enthusiasm", "energy", "good humour", "an ability to co-ordinate, liaise and to delegate" and "the example of hard work to the rest of the team." Additional comments from individual headteachers were made:-

"the ability to see issues from a wide perspective"

"an ability to stand back and advise and to act when necessary"

"to listen and encourage other people to express their views".

One head saw his particular strength as being organisational but said that he had a strong feeling for the welfare of children within the

school. This head also brought "stability and calmness" to the team together with an ability to see both sides of the debate. He usually "consulted others" and saw himself as being "primus inter pares" ("first among equals").

The comments in this and the previous section suggest that there is some variation in heads' perception as to the roles they play within the senior management teams and the strengths which they bring to the teams. This may contribute to the varying success of the operation of senior management teams in schools. Some headteachers clearly saw their role as leading a team with everybody playing their full part in the success of the team, while others were somewhat reluctant to relinquish some of their power and fully delegate. There is an enormous difference between "Here is a problem, let's all consider it and see how we can jointly arrive at a solution" and "Here is a problem, this is what I have decided to do to solve it; how can we best present and implement it?"

The hierarchical nature of the staffing in school does, to an extent, militate against the development of curriculum teams. Instead, considerable power and responsibility is invested in the headteachers, and some may seem reluctant to give this up. However, unless the senior team is operating effectively and the head is prepared to allow the other members of the team to play a full role in the running of the school, then difficulties may arise in attempting to manage recent change in teaching and learning styles. The implementation of LMS and the opportunity of 'opting-out' has widespread implications for the headteacher in particular. "He must now undertake financial management for example", claimed one

headteacher "and delegate curriculum management to another member of his team".

#### 4:4 The Demands of the Job

The demands felt by many headteachers are caused by pressures from outside and within the school, both of which contribute to the complexity of the role. In a research project on staff management conducted by Lyons, Stenning and McQueeny (1985) it was found that a picture emerged of a headteacher who is not equipped to deal with the growing complexity of staff management problems.

"The headteacher is called upon to deal with these matters virtually on a daily basis and has done so with a lack of formal knowledge and the background of skills and experience which would be available to him or her as a manager in other employment sectors." (p.68)

Dennison (1985) writes of the impossible task that confronts senior managers in education in present circumstances:

"Irrespective of deficiencies in current arrangements (i.e. headteacher training programmes, inadequate selection procedures etc.,) it would be naive to argue that the task of headship has not become more difficult over the last fifteen years." (p.222)

Morgan and Hall (1982) claim that external pressures for more accountability have been paralleled by the growth of internal pressure for more open management within schools and new internal demands on headteachers. The implication of falling rolls to a school, staff motivation, falling resources in real terms and

increasing discipline problems can all be included in the "professional domain."

Researchers see the divide between the "public domain" and the "professional domain" as an "hour glass" with heads at the neck receiving all the pressure from the familiar internal influences and from external influences much less familiar to them in terms of any specialized training.

Yukl (1982) suggests that headteachers will need to spend more time than before on external activities in, for example, shaping community expectations, gaining co-operation and support in the community, buffering against outside interference, resisting ill-advised programmes imposed from above, and in conducting public relation activities to build up a good image for the school. Yukl also demonstrated that headteachers will not only be concerned with external activities for "the high level of exposure suggests that principals will devote considerable time to monitoring internal activities and handling disturbances promptly."

Headteachers who were interviewed were encouraged to respond to the question "In what ways do you think your role as headteacher has changed in recent years?"

Responses divide into two major categories - the internal demands and the external demands. Headteachers appeared to remember with great clarity the initial period of their headship. For one head it came as a complete shock from which it took a while to recover:

"My first year as a head was hell." Even with a previous knowledge of the school and with substantial experience in education the enormity of the task of a head upon taking up the appointment proved rather daunting for one head.

"The problem on the first day is the same after four years. The enormity of the task. There is no way in which you can be prepared. The deputy head's job does not prepare you for headship. All it does is enable you to know what the deputy head does when you are a head."

There was a general consensus amongst the majority of headteachers that perhaps a more systematic preparation for headship is required prior to taking up the appointment. One headteacher claimed to have had "no structured prior preparation" and he had to rely on "trial and error on the job" experience.

Another headteacher confirmed the views of Mintzberg (1973) on the fragmentation of tasks when he commented that he attended a management course prior to taking up his appointment and even that did not match the reality of the actual job:

"I went on a course in management before taking up this post - one of those courses when you think nothing can possibly be like this. One was given an impossible task followed by another impossible task. As the pace increased I could not finish one before taking on the other. I thought 'life can't be like that'. - Then I became a head and found that it's just like that. The first year as a head was bewildering. There was no adequate training that I'd had for an area like this."

From the comments of headteachers when they reflect back on their initial years, it would seem that perhaps more needs to be done in

the form of tangible, ongoing, individualised support to enable headteachers to 'weather the storm' of the early period in office.

All headteachers were asked the question "what management tasks do you think are unique for a headteacher?"...

The following responses were given:-

Final authority (where the buck stops, ultimate decision maker)

Public relations ("fronting", figure-head)

Ethos setting/vision creating (establishment of identity, philosophy)

Team builder

Unique whole school view

Maintain links with LEA, HMI, Governors

Appointment of staff

Finance Manager

Managing the pace of change

Accountability.

Though less elegantly phrased, they closely resemble the results published by Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1983) and outlined in the work of Dean (1985). The range of answers was considerable and varied between the two extremes. At one end, the unique elements being defined as being legally required to maintain the overall responsibility and the various accountabilities to the governors, LEA, parents, pupils and the community at large. At the other extreme was a head who wanted to include all kinds of daily and routine elements within his unique role. The majority however settled for tasks which most definitely included the direction setting and ethos creating function as outlined in various DES and HMI publications.

"The character and quality of the headteacher are by far the main influence in determining what a school sets out to do, and the extent to which it achieves these aims." (DES 1977)

Similarly Ten Good Schools (DES 1977) concluded that "Without exception, the most important single factor in the success of these schools is the quality of leadership."

At times some heads found it a pressure determining an order of priorities in the allocation of time and one suggested that this may be due to the "wider role" to be fulfilled. "It takes the head out of school a great deal and this places a reliance on the rest of the senior management team." Because of the wider demands headteachers generally saw the clear necessity of having a shared responsibility with the senior management team.

One head commented:

"If I had not my senior staff it would be difficult to cope with problems which arise. We work as a team. They've worked for me from the beginning. With all the things the head is supposed to do I couldn't cope alone."

However the wider role proves to be a constant problem no matter how experienced the headteacher:

"I've always found it difficult to pace myself in this job. The biggest problem is the wider job. The prerequisite of the head is that he should be available to talk to people. But he can be too available."

The sense of the wider responsibility of the job is present from the first day on taking up the appointment through to the termination of the job. Headteachers indicated that no previous post in school had held such a demand nor was any preparation possible to make them fully aware of this aspect of the work.

One of the tasks of the headteachers is to bring a sense of leadership and direction to the school. This inevitably means change. The researcher found when interviewing headteachers that bringing change to a school proved an extremely complex and demanding undertaking. No two schools are the same and therefore there is no one set of proven guidelines which will necessarily succeed. Resistance to change proved a long and difficult task to handle as some heads had not met this previously. This is an area where headteachers taking up appointment find themselves totally unprepared but it is at the same time a management task which cannot be ignored. When one considers bringing about change through leadership skills, it becomes apparent from the views of headteachers that training in managing change and more self-awareness of the 'change process' may be beneficial prior to taking up post.

In the last twenty five years there has been a considerable growth in the amount of legislation, government initiatives and local authority directives in education. As this has worked its way through to schools the headteacher occupies the pivotal position between the "public domain" and the "professional domain". Some heads interviewed feel that they are more and more administrators of a system rather than educational leaders.



They question the value of many of the requests from the LEA. Their general view is that the LEA should re-examine their administrative demands and eradicate unnecessary inter-departmental duplication. A new headteacher was bombarded with publications in the early stages suggesting a lack of perception of priorities on the part of the LEA administrative staff. Many heads see much of the paperwork to be of little value and their frustration increases when the same information is requested a second time in a different format.

Demands on the headteacher from the wider community are considerable in some cases. Consequently the growth in awareness for good public relations has increased. A head commented "I feel that I'm responsible for the wider PR of the school - both inside and outside. This has become more intense."

The question arises whether or not headteachers require systematic training in all aspects of external communication - publicity, press, parents, community etc., in order that the bridge between the public and the professional domain is maintained. The growth of external demands means additional loading on the head. This is deemed to be an essential part of the work and therefore the headteacher must make allowance for this when making a balance with the demands of the professional domain.

The role of the headteacher is extremely diffuse and it is increasingly difficult for the head to establish 'boundaries of concern' with all those members of society directly or indirectly involved with young people. One might infer there has to be an acknowledgement of partnership between home, school and community.

Headteachers have had to consciously develop public relations skills.

Lambert (1984) writes:

"For survival, the head must be a political animal and survival cannot be achieved alone."

All the headteachers interviewed were very conscious of the expectations of others as to the role they should perform. Everybody - governors, LEA, staff, parents etc., - all had their various perceptions as to what the head should be and the role he or she should perform. Some heads were willing to accept these various role expectations; others were determined to change the status quo. One head claimed that he was "educating" the PTA not to expect him to attend every meeting and function.

In order to prevent the position from becoming untenable, let alone overtly stressful and lonely, the team approach with the head as the leader of a senior management team was seen as welcome by those interviewed and indeed the only way forward. As one head stated, "my deputies and senior teachers are making decisions in their own areas. If you're not delegating, you're not doing your job as a manager." It seems appropriate that one crucial and additional role of the headteacher should be the preparation and professional development of other members of the senior management team.

THE ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS  
IN SECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

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Volume 4 of 5

5:1 The Management Role of the Deputy Head and Senior Teachers

A survey on the management functions of the Secondary deputy head organised by the Secondary Heads Association was published in 1989. Results of this enquiry were based on over 1300 responses to the SHA questionnaire. Despite any weight the enquiry may have lent to subsequent salary negotiations, the main findings and the list of major responsibilities the report has associated with the role of deputy headteachers are both illuminating and relevant to this enquiry.

An extract from the report states:-

"This list (of duties and responsibilities) contains many elements that schools were not expected to deliver three years ago. Heads, in order to give credibility to every initiative and innovation which schools have been asked to take on board, have invariably entrusted their management and implementation to someone with authority within the school - the deputy head. Clearly, no deputy performs every duty outlined in this report, but there is no question that deputies have assumed an increased work-load as each initiative comes on stream."

Two respondents summed this up:

"My job description of seven years ago bears little relation to what is expected of me now."

and

"I have been a deputy head for twelve years. During the last three years I have seen my work load trebled."

An overwhelming number of comments emphasised the joint responsibilities of team management between heads and deputies, but much mention was made of heads being increasingly out of school, representing the school to public and politicians. The deputies on the other hand are in school implementing and managing the expectations of Government, the LEA, teachers, parents and other interested bodies. One deputy felt that deputies are now fulfilling the role that heads did in the past: "Most heads are being called out to meetings regularly, so the deputy takes full control. It's not the head's fault, it is just a changing role."

The SHA Report (1989) claims that deputies have clearly had more responsibilities in the last few years which is changing their role - they are becoming more akin to American High School administrators. However the survey also revealed that deputies on average have a 40% teaching commitment, which, in view of the previous statement, is perhaps excessive. No one seems to have any idea of how many hours they should take to do the job. They, like heads, have no 1265 hours limit on their directed time.

When interviewed, one deputy stated:

"The job of deputy is not 'deputizing for the head' but carrying out major responsibilities of administration, for the efficient functioning of the school."

This view was reiterated by other deputies and these "major responsibilities" included "LMS. Staff Development. Records of Achievement. Units of Accreditation Co-ordinator. GCSE Co-ordinator. TVEI. Community/School Organisation. Computer Management

Systems Organiser. Staff Appraisal. Curriculum Review. Servicing Governor's Sub-committees. Child Abuse Matters. Health and Safety Matters. Lunchtime Supervision. Press Officer. Marketing the School. Preparing Booklets for Staff and Parents. Raising Funds for the School. National Curriculum. Writing the Timetable. Discipline and Pastoral Matters. Hit man. Equal Opportunities. Enterprise Education and Work Experience Programme. Monitoring the Needs of the Least Able. DES Forms and Questionnaires. Maintenance and Fabric of the School Buildings. To this list (by no means exhaustive) can be added the everyday trivia a deputy has always dealt with - lockers, bus duty, reception of visitors for the multiplicity of events a school stages and the emergencies of the daily round - summed up by one deputy as "Everything no-one else will do."

It is also significant that some deputy headteachers interviewed explained that they could not easily locate a copy of the job descriptions, that the original document was now irrelevant, or insubstantial in the light of their current duties, or explained that major revisions of senior management job descriptions were currently in progress.

Throughout the interviews I attempted to discover areas of responsibility which deputies and senior teachers are exercising or would like to experience prior to headship.

I divided schools into two broad categories:-

- (a) Basically Traditional where the responsibilities of the senior managers were, in general terms, split along the lines of Administration, Pastoral and Curriculum.

(b) Basically Non-Traditional where the responsibilities of each member of the team deliberately contained elements of all three.

In order to gain the full breadth of vision and experience required before headship, the Non-Traditional role model seemed to offer more. This was because the management structure enabled "Job Rotation" to take place more readily. The change from overall responsibility for buildings, years 8 and 9 and Science and Design to timetable, years 10 and 11 and English and Modern Language is less traumatic than to change from Pastoral to Curriculum. It was perhaps too early in the day to see if this structure was as good in ensuring the effective running of the school, but as far as the personal development of the incumbents was concerned it was serving them very well.

Goodhead (1985) certainly suggests job rotation as a possible avenue for development.

"Job rotation can lead not only to a wider acquisition of experience by the deputy head but also to increased job satisfaction and greater effectiveness of school aims. Consequently both concepts are directly related to the professional development of senior staff, and the development of organisational effectiveness within the school."

Time and time again it was stressed during the research interviews that potential heads should be given opportunities to experience all the various areas of management responsibility. However, it was realised that, although there was merit in "having a go" at almost everything, there were certain key areas of experience. A thorough appreciation of curricular issues, including close work with the

construction of the timetable is vital. Equally, work with staffing including all the personnel work related to the appointment of staff, team building, staff development and appraisal would similarly seem to be essential. Recent legislation has highlighted the need for close work with governors yet this realm is an area in which deputies and senior teachers perhaps still have too few opportunities to gain the necessary experience and develop the appropriate skills.

"Working with governors" was one area in the interviews which was constantly being referred to, probably because of the enhanced role and increased responsibility given to governing bodies. Less than half the members of senior management teams interviewed and surveyed attend governor's meetings. Given the vast range of issues, which will, of necessity be raised at governor's meetings, it may be thought surprising that heads find this situation tenable. Individual headteachers cannot possibly have the detailed knowledge over such a wide range of issues. However one deputy who was interviewed referred to "a defence mechanism on the part of the headteacher" whereby members of the senior management team did not attend governor's meetings.

The deputy continued "our head prefers to be the sole liaison with governors. He does not wish to put his deputies, who may speak their mind, in a position where they may be going against the head. This could lead to a situation where the deputy head and governors may be seen to put pressure on the head."

Another deputy suggested a "reluctance on the part of governing bodies to allow any member of the senior management team, other than



the head, to participate in a governors' meeting. They perceive a shift in their power and consider this power could be eroded by the presence and influence of members of the senior management team."

However in an effective senior management team situation it would seem only right and natural for the appropriate deputy/senior teacher to be involved in the debate over his or her area of responsibility. For professional development it would seem to be an essential experience to attend governors meetings and become familiar with the work of the governors. Governing bodies should therefore be positively encouraged to welcome all members of the senior management team to their meetings when appropriate. Although legislation prevents the latter from voting, they could nevertheless participate fully in discussion. Governors too have a part to play in ensuring that those senior managers who may wish to consider headship in the future gain valuable insight into this increasingly important aspect of educational management.

A slightly higher percentage of senior managers was involved with governors' sub-committees. In particular they were involved in servicing "curriculum" and/or "Buildings & Maintenance" committees.

With the introduction of LMS many senior managers are eager to gain experience in the resource management of schools and it is likely in the future that appointing committees will be looking for some expertise in this area. Work with and in the community, including links with industry, is seen as a useful added dimension for deputies and senior teachers to enjoy. The whole realm of public relations, marketing and dealing with the press are issues with which heads have and will

need to deal. However a deputy whose sole brief is "Community" is perhaps least well prepared for headship because in the main he or she seems to lose out in dealing with the more traditionally school-orientated issues.

Job rotation is one mechanism which has been used very successfully to allow a change of roles, thus giving extra scope for growth and development of the individual. It can also have very positive effects on the school as a whole. Sometimes it may not be possible due to the nature of the personalities involved, but it is a device which can be used to increase motivation and commitment, even when there is no career promotion in mind. Certainly to have some experience of the management of change was seen to be a vital component in the armoury of a member of a senior management team seeking a headship.

Perhaps as important as any one specific job is the essential opportunity to see the overall picture - the whole school perspective. This issue is of paramount importance to senior managers and is predominantly determined by the headteacher. If the head is willing to share and discuss openly the complete and full range of all the management issues concerning the school, all its activities and problems, with the senior management team, then this is the best possible training for potential heads. The whole realm of seeing philosophy put into practice, to be able to share in this critical thinking and planning - as it were, to be given the opportunity to see things through the head's eyes and to see the full impact of decisions made - gives unequalled insight. This assertion was strongly reinforced by one of those interviewed who had had

acting head responsibility. Although it was not quite the "real thing", it was, in his view, the single most sought after experience. "Where I was involved in the thinking and planning, and had responsibility as acting head, it was noticeably beneficial".

One deputy suggested that he and other colleagues spent some of their time performing administrative chores that could be done equally well by sixteen year olds of average ability. He claimed that it was "an appalling abuse of senior staff's particular skills and expertise as well as an expensive waste of staff resources, hardly likely to provide job satisfaction." The problem however in this situation lies with the headteacher who has not found it possible to delegate real responsibility, but only a series of administrative tasks. Another interviewee claimed that delegation must be "real, effective, well thought out and relevant to both the needs of the school and the individual." A senior teacher said "It is too easy for members of the senior management team to have ill-defined jobs, lacking real areas of their own to manage and develop." Perhaps it is therefore the responsibility of each headteacher to create the space and opportunity for each member of their senior management team to experience the widest possible range of activities within school management. This requires courage, time and self confidence on behalf of existing heads as they see skills and aptitudes develop which, in certain areas, may be stronger than their own. To allow a total sharing, but without abdicating the final responsibility, cannot be easy. The research data indicates that members of the senior management team "want to become involved with the LEA, to do some public speaking at parents' evenings, to chair meetings and to take on a wide range of responsibilities and activities in the

education service outside their own school." It was encapsulated by one head who said "Heads must make a conscious decision to pass things on and ensure that members of the senior team do the right things, meet the right people, attend the right courses and ensure that they are involved in all the decision making processes."

With the increased pressure of National Curriculum, Open Enrolment, LMS, Records of Achievement, Appraisal and other new initiatives, heads would be under an unbearable work load unless they adopted a truly team management approach. This, in the long run, may help an increasingly large number of deputies to experience real responsibility, and emphasises once again the importance of preparing new heads for their responsibilities.

## 5:2 The Main Concepts Underpinning Senior Management

### 5.2.1 Purpose

There was a wide variation in the perceived rôle of the senior management team as expressed in the responses to the question "What do you think are the most important functions of the management team of this school?"

"To ensure the day to day running of the school."

"To provide good administration to allow teachers to perform at their best."

"To enable the staff and the pupils to realise their full potential."

"To enable one person's decision to be that of the group."

"To initiate and control what goes on in the school."

"To establish basic school policy; to receive suggestions from the staff; to evaluate and implement as necessary."

"To get the school working towards common aims and goals, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas."

"To administer and direct the organisation of the school, to contribute to the atmosphere of the school by creating a good example."

"To establish the ethos of the school."

"To establish a direction the school is moving to ensure that short term events meet the long term aims."

"To provide leadership in making decisions."

"To assist the head in managing the school."

"To ensure that the best interests of the staff and of the students are met."

"To plan, to provide cohesion for ideas, and to provide authority for the implementation of those ideas."

It is clear that some senior management teams see their role as providing a clear direction for the development of the school; to act as a forum for ideas; to evaluate and then disseminate policies and to communicate actively with the staff. Other team members see the role of the senior staff as day to day administration, making sure the school runs efficiently but with no clear role in terms of policy making, planning or providing direction.

#### 5:2:2 Membership of the Team

Of the five schools visited (including the school used to pilot the research) one had a senior management team of four, one of five, one of six and two of seven. In the smallest team it comprised the head and three deputies. With teams this small it should possibly be easier to achieve a much greater level of cohesion and for the team to operate more effectively. However the evidence discussed later suggests that this is not necessarily the case. The other four teams comprised not only the head and deputies but senior teachers (Grade E allowance) within the school as well.

The advantages of the larger team were, that more tasks were able to be covered by members of the senior team and there was greater opportunity for a larger number of roles to naturally exist among the team members. There was however, the major disadvantage, which was apparent in more than one case, of a lack of cohesion among the members of the team. There was considerable resentment among some senior teachers, who felt that most of the major decisions were made at a head or head and deputy level, and that they were merely nominal

members of the senior team. One stated "The head and deputies have by far the greatest influence, far greater than the senior teachers. We are not perceived as having a high management participation in terms of decision-making."

It is worth pointing out that membership of the teams was decided by the school and in many cases by the headteacher alone. In one school the senior team had recently been enlarged as another member of staff had been promoted to senior teacher. The senior teacher welcomed this as giving him an opportunity to play a role in the school's management but there was resentment from one deputy head who wondered what his role was in the new order of things.

The interviews confirmed general agreement of the need to be aware of the role that individuals will play in the senior management team. Moreover the interaction between a new member and the rest of the senior team is crucial in the success of its operation. However it appeared that not all schools gave this serious thought when new appointments were made. One deputy head commented:

"I was appointed to institute change but some of the existing members of the senior team did not perceive this to be my role."

This led to frustration with the new member feeling he either had to work round the system or give up. In either case it did not contribute towards the feeling of unity, which is necessary if the senior team is to present a unanimous view to the rest of the school community.

The problem had been exacerbated in another school when the new appointee was the headteacher. He had been appointed to promote

change which had already begun within the school but which needed to be accelerated. There is an obvious wariness between the existing members of the senior team, who are perhaps accustomed to particular ways, and the new head. The headteacher claimed:

"In these circumstances considerable effort was made to ensure that the team was operating effectively as quickly as possible. The team examined its methods of operations and its decision making procedures at an early stage, so that the best of the old and the new could be brought together as quickly as possible for the benefit of the school."

#### 5:2:3 Priorities

All the interviewees were asked the question "What priorities do you see for the school over the next couple of years?" It was significant that in no school was there unanimity among team members as to what priorities for the school should be over this relatively short period. All schools had been through reorganisation in terms of National Curriculum and LMS and therefore recognised the need for stability and consolidation. However many of the priorities that were given reflected the individual team member's responsibilities and did not suggest that there was a great deal of discussion about priorities within team meetings. It might have been thought that the smaller teams would have provided the greater unanimity of purpose but this was not the case. The following two schools serve as examples:



School A

"Stability of the year 10 and year 11 curriculum."

"A full development of a pastoral curriculum."

"The improvement of relationships between staff students."

"A greater pride in premises and environment."

"The development of social and extra curricular activities."

"Improved teaching styles and classroom management."

These were responses from three team members.

School B

"Appraisal of staff and the development of profiling for pupils."

"The extension of multi-cultural education."

"The improvement of community awareness throughout the school."

"The expansion of computer networks."

"The movement of the year 7 integrated curriculum into year 8."

"The development of Flexible and Distance learning for years 12 and 13."

"Greater academic standards."

"Greater emphasis on Performing Arts throughout the school."

This list was a response from four members of the senior team, and whilst some of them are complementary it would be difficult for all of them to be taken on board within the short term. Instead the school would need to determine what its focus should be over the next couple of years. Nevertheless the range of priorities serve to emphasise the extent that day to day issues can take precedence in senior teams' discussions and in the members' work within the school over the short and medium term policy planning issues.

The lack of consensus with regard to priorities among the senior team introduces the question as to the tasks and the roles of senior team members within schools. In most schools senior team members have clearly defined tasks, although many of them were related to the day to day running of the school rather than to having a major responsibility for policy making. The distinction between tasks and roles is the key to the successful development of senior management teams. If senior management teams are made up of individuals who have specific management tasks to undertake within the school, then the notion of role definition is less important. If, on the other hand, it is hoped to develop a totally integrated team, with each member being able to share responsibility for what others within the team are undertaking, then it is necessary to examine more carefully

the roles that each individual undertakes within the team. In this way we will be able to create teams which are stronger than the individuals which make them up, highlighting particular strengths and overcoming individual weaknesses.

In all the schools visited the head and the deputies had a clear function for whole school policy with clearly defined job descriptions that related to the whole school. In three schools there were distinctions between pastoral, administrative and curricular responsibilities as far as the deputy heads were concerned.

The senior teachers in the senior management team had a much wider variation in roles and it is significant that in some schools their position is less well defined. Quite often they are members of the senior management team without any school management brief in their job description and often they have little time to discharge a senior management function. One team member who had responsibility for Upper School (years 9,10 and 11) claimed:

"I have little or no time for my senior team function. There again, there is no real senior management. You can only have top management."

He confirmed the views of the senior teacher who claimed:

"We are not perceived as having a high management participation in terms of decision making."

#### 5:2:4 The Importance of Teams and Coherence within the Institution

The responses to the question "How important is the development of teams in this school" were very positive. Since all of the schools interviewed had not refused when asked to participate and it was obvious that I was focussing on the management and development of teams, I expected a positive response to this question. In posing the question, I defined a team as 'group interaction directed towards a common purpose'. A wide range of reasons were offered to explain why the establishment of teams within the school was an important aspect of the school's development.

"The size of the organisation requires the establishment of effective teams. There is the need to ensure all teams are pulling together."

"Individuals function better if they feel they are part of a team; an effective team offers support."

"Good team work spreads good practice."

"Weaker members are supported and encouraged."

"Good teams allow discussion and the exchange of views."

"Greater commitment arises from team work."

"Newer members of the team are able to be effectively supported."

"People work better if there are clear departmental aims; the organisation is better and it supports the individual."

"In a strong team ideas are created and are able to be effectively developed."

"The establishment of strong teams provides the institution with coherence and therefore improves performance."

"Only with the development of teams can a real sense of purpose be developed."

"strong teams mean good classroom practice."

"Only with the development of teams can consistent standards be maintained throughout the school."

"Strong teams can produce ownership of the ideas that have been created."

"Teams maximise the expertise and skill of teachers and are able to channel the enthusiasm of colleagues."

"If teams are effective the lines of communication are much clearer within the school."

"The time for autocracy in schools has gone; schools which may have worked that way would not do so now because a far too narrow a view of what a school's function was, existed."

"Schools are now so complex in their function and in their outcomes that no-one has the total range of skills needed."

"Staff must work together in order to get the best from the children."

"The children benefit if the staff are seen to be working together."

"Membership of a team clarifies the individual's role within the school."

"As schools have got larger, it is becoming increasingly important to develop strong teams within it, otherwise the school cannot function."

Most of the responses indicated that team work was far more essential now than it had been in the past and that a strong senior management team was vital if the school was to operate effectively. Strong teams were the only way in which innovation could be introduced to the school and carried through to completion.

Teams allowed for the development of ideas and provided mutual support and confidence for the team members. A number of the interviewees mentioned the need for appropriate leadership and most saw this as a prerequisite for successful teamwork. It was recognised that it was important for the senior management team, not only to work effectively as a team within itself, but that it had to ensure that the good practice it was developing was propagated throughout the school. There was an instance of a team that felt

that it had in the past spent so much time improving its own practice that it had lost sight of the need to communicate with the rest of the school. That team is now taking steps to rectify the situation.

#### 5:2:5 The Nature of Senior Team Meetings

In each school I observed at least one senior management team meeting. This observation was almost always non-participatory and written notes were taken during observation. Senior management meetings provide the team with the opportunity to discuss, to plan, to come to decisions on day to day management as well as long term school policy. It is the occasion when the team can share problems in a formal organised way and where the team can achieve coherence and can provide mutual support for each of the members. A review of three of the meetings that I attended will illustrate the variety of approach by the different schools to the senior team meetings and will give some indication of the variation in the senior management team operation in the schools.

##### School A

This meeting took place after school and lasted just over an hour and, whilst it was mainly a meeting giving and seeking information which took about 60% of the total time, nevertheless items were discussed and it was a well structured meeting.

There was an agenda, although it was agreed by the members subsequently, that there was too much on the agenda and that the time

allowances to the subjects on the agenda were not as well thought out as they might have been.

Although the head made a major contribution to the meeting, all the members except one (and this was a team of six) contributed fully to the discussion. However the meeting was significant in that one team member made no contribution during the whole of the discussion that took place. When questioned afterwards about this, he said that the items on the agenda did not relate to his particular responsibility.

The team members, when questioned afterwards, said that the meetings were generally becoming more business like and that they were managing their time better than previously. What was still needed was a balance between discussion and decision making and between the immediate needs of the school as opposed to long term planning.

#### School B

This meeting took place during timetabled time and lasted one hour and ten minutes. Despite a lengthy meeting at that time of the day there is no doubt that the items at the end of the agenda were very rushed and indeed people were still discussing points as they disappeared through the door.

The head dominated the meeting, speaking twice as much as the next highest contributor. He took a leading role and sat behind his desk with the other team members in a semi circle in front of him.



The agenda was crowded and quite a lot of time was spent on routine matters. Others, which the members said afterwards were rather more significant and which they would have preferred to have discussed, were hurried and there was little time given to them. When questioned afterwards members commented that, too often, material needed for information was not available early enough before the meeting, and that items that needed discussing before decisions were made, were not able to be considered fully enough.

One major issue was raised and a decision was presented to the meeting by the head. This decision was discussed but it was apparent that there was no likelihood of the meeting actually changing the decision. When questioned about this subsequently two of the team members were unhappy with the decision but were clearly not surprised that it had been presented to the meeting in this way. A degree of tension seemed to exist within the senior team and when interviewed the same two members referred to above were of the opinion that senior team meetings generally could be improved and there was too little time to discuss things. The members of the team generally felt that much of the information could have been exchanged on paper and that major issues within the school were not debated. The comment was also made that there was very little sharing by the team of individual concerns and that delegation meant exactly what it said: responsibility for a particular area was delegated and even after discussion it was left to that individual to come to a decision on that particular aspect of the school's work. Little or no input was made by the other team members. There is no doubt that the members of the team were very experienced, had all been teaching at the school for many years and exercised their responsibilities

effectively. However the majority felt that a greater sharing of this responsibility could produce an even more effective team.

### School C

This meeting took place after school and lasted one-and-a-half hours. There was an agenda although it had not been available before the meeting and comments afterwards suggested that the team would like a tighter agenda. Similarly members commented on the lack of minutes or a record of decisions that were made and other schools visited made similar comments. It is not clear whether this is a planned omission or whether it is felt that everybody knows what decisions are made, and therefore there is no need to record them.

During the meeting all the members contributed fully to discussion, although there were occasions when the discussion became more a dialogue between two of the members. There was a reasonable balance between information exchanging and decision making although there was some discussion about personalities, which were largely anecdotal.

At this meeting there was more disagreement among team members than had been observed in other schools. This may be a reflection of the greater amount of decision making as opposed to information exchange that took place and in any case the degree of disagreement was made in a positive way.

Comments by the team after the meeting suggested that the atmosphere of the meeting was typical. However concern was expressed about the scheduling of the meeting after school when people are tired. One

member mentioned the length of the meetings which usually go on longer than the one I attended.

From the review of meetings that took place in the schools, a number of points emerged that can be seen as critical but which, it is hoped, will highlight the need for development in particular areas.

The smallest team observed met in school time. It is obviously easier to schedule a meeting in school time when there are a smaller number of people who have to be brought together. However it was clear that this was too short a meeting and that items towards the end were hurried and often discussed as people were leaving the meeting. The other meetings took place after school. Here there was no pressure of time and the meetings were lengthy. However the fact that there is no immediate pressure of time makes the team less business-like in its operation. Some comments were made that the team members at the end of a hard school day are not really in a suitable frame of mind to discuss items fully and to make important decisions. There appears to be no real solution to this problem, because the small team did not seem to carry the full range of responsibilities needed to run a large comprehensive school. At the same time it is difficult, given the levels of staffing that exist at the moment, to bring together five or more senior members of staff within the school day to discuss policy.

One meeting observed had no agenda. In the meetings where there was an agenda, it was usually prepared by the headteacher and some senior teachers commented that they would like access to the agenda. The meeting which had no agenda did not produce minutes of what had been

decided. During my next visit to that school I tested this lack of minutes concerning a discussion on the issue of school-based in-service training. I asked two members of the team what had been decided; they were either uncertain or were contradictory in their responses. It is therefore important that minutes are produced or at least a note of the decisions that have been taken so that everyone knows and can then share the responsibility for these decisions.

Status was sometimes implied by the seating arrangements at the meetings, with the headteacher occupying the dominant position and this is reflected in the fact that the headteacher often made the major contribution to the discussions at the meetings. With some issues the discussion was not really an open one and decisions had already been taken. They were merely being presented to the meeting with little opportunity for the decisions to be altered and certainly not to be countermanded. On such occasions there was little debate and thus the views of the other team members were not really being sought. This caused resentment in a minority of cases. There was little or no 'bringing in' and members, who were not prepared to contribute were allowed to sit at the meetings and take little or no part. A considerable proportion of the time at the senior team meetings is spent on information exchange and much of the time could be saved if papers were prepared beforehand, so that the team members have an opportunity to prepare for the meeting.

A lot of time is spent on what is said subsequently to be a minor item, while major items that need discussion and debate are often passed over or dealt with very quickly, causing a degree of dissatisfaction among team members. A number of comments were made

about the lack of time to prepare papers and to plan the meetings, but it is clear that some time spent in preparation would save time at the meetings and make them more worthwhile and important events in determining school policy.

In one school comments were made about the integrity of the discussion and this is an important aspect. If debate is to take place on what must inevitably be sensitive issues, members of the team have got to feel that their comments can be made honestly and openly within the meeting and not broadcast to the school and community at large.

I was very grateful at being allowed to observe the senior team meetings. My presence in some cases may have made a difference; team members were more reserved, which meant that debate may not have been as fluent as usual. On the other hand some meetings were more business-like and there had been greater preparation beforehand because of my expected presence.

It was interesting that the team meeting in many ways seemed to reflect the nature of the team. Well organised open meetings suggested that the team might be operating effectively. Where the meeting was badly organised and where information exchange took the major part, prior or subsequent interviewing indicated that the team was, either in its formative stage, or that there was little chance of it developing fully until major adjustments were made. This raises the issue of whether or not meetings set the 'tone' of the team; if the quality of the meetings 'improved' would the effectiveness of the team similarly improve?

#### 5:2:6 The Team's Relationship with the Head

The members of the senior team were asked to comment on the influence and style that the head used in his day to day dealings within the school. There are no right or wrong ways of influencing people and the question was designed to see how closely the head's view of their influence and style matched that of the other team members.

In the majority of interviews the responses indicated a close agreement between the head's view and the rest of the team. Favourable responses included:

"The head spends a great deal of time promoting the idea of teamwork among senior colleagues and this is a welcome change from the previous head."

"The head is good with people, supportive, capable of being criticised, hardworking, patient, calm under pressure and able to develop a team spirit."

"He leads the team by persuasion rather than attempting to be autocratic."

Other team members when being interviewed about the head mentioned these qualities: "well informed; shrewd; has the ability to listen; involves people; full of enthusiasm; good at public relations; very knowledgeable about educational matters, with a clear understanding of current issues; dedicated to the job."

Where responses like these were given the senior staff were actively involved in team building and were concerned to improve the performance, not only of the senior team, but of teams in the school. An assumption may be made that the more work that goes into the development of a senior management team, the closer the senior members and the head become and thus the better able the head is to exercise his or her responsibilities.

In one school however the team's view of the head was not as favourable. This appeared to have an adverse effect on the operation of the senior management team but it is not easy to analyse poor perception of the head by the other members of the team. It seemed as if the head was seen by the senior staff as, in reality, making all the decisions and merely using the senior team to confirm these decisions. There was a notable lack of debate about policy making and consequently the team felt powerless to influence anything to a great extent. It is not entirely clear as to whether this was due to the wish of the head to lead from the front in a somewhat autocratic way, or whether it was a response to the perceived weakness of some senior staff and thus being used by the head as the only way of 'getting things done.' It is open to question whether a complex organisation like a modern comprehensive school can be led and run in a way that denies senior staff a full voice in the operation of the institution.

6:1 Behaviour that Signals Stress

During the research interviews many members of the senior management teams described feelings of "stress" and "fatigue". These were not concepts which the researcher had put forward for the interviewees to react to and consequently they had not been included in the earlier literature review. They were instead concepts which were introduced by the interviewees themselves and in this study "stress" is defined by the participants themselves. It is synonymous with "feeling under pressure"; "surviving"; "feelings of insecurity and anxiety"; "feeling knackered"; "the experience of tiredness and fatigue".

The literature on stress ranges over a wide variety of investigations into occupations, organisations, human types and mechanisms of coping with stress conditions. A brief review enabled the researcher to focus on stress and the effects within the context of management of the school. While there is no accepted definition of stress, it is generally seen as the consequence of a dynamic relationship between person and environment.

"Stress involves an interaction of person and environment. Something happens 'out there' which presents a person with a demand, or constraint, or an opportunity for behaviour." (McGrath 1968)

"Stress arises from an employee's perception of an environmental demand which exceeds his or her resources." (Shirom 1982)



Stress is any action or situation placing physical and psychological demands upon a person that can unbalance a person's equilibrium. Burn-out is total physical and emotional exhaustion, often coupled with the change in attitude toward people and to work. The imbalance in physical or psychological equilibrium affects motivation, attitudes and personal interaction.

Holmes and Rahe (1967) define stress as the intensity and length of time needed to adjust to life events. They reason that stress increases as the intensity of the event becomes greater and the adjustment time lengthens. Each person is affected in their own personal way depending on the relationship between the individual and the situation in which they find themselves.

Seyle (1974) distinguishes between stress that is positive and that which is negative. Positive stress is that factor necessary for one to perform well, particularly under pressure. The good feelings experienced by one who is winning are positive forces that foster a sense of achievement and encourage exceptional performance. Distress or negative stress is experienced by an individual who fails to achieve. Feelings of insecurity, helplessness or desperation, are associated with negative stress. There is little doubt that worker productivity, as well as a person's physical and mental health, is affected greatly by stress and tension.

People under stress often display certain characteristics. Quick and Quick (1979) write:

"Individuals under stress complain of insomnia, depression, general fatigue and stomach disorders. Stress creates job dissatisfaction."  
(p.16)

In an article in the Observer dated 30/9/84 on the subject of stress, William Mitchell, a Clinical Psychologist added to the list the following:-

"difficulty in concentrating, headaches, muscular tension, lethargy, loss of interest in leisure activities, increased alcohol consumption, withdrawal from family and friends, irritability, loss of sense of humour, mounting pessimism and feeling of self doubt."

Knutton and Mycroft (1986) comment:

"The actual feelings of stress felt by a person are only directly accessible to them and not to the researcher." (p.50)

In my research as participants described feelings of stress and fatigue. I gained the impression that some actually welcomed the opportunity to talk to someone about their feelings and anxieties. The fact that I was outside their school I believe was significant, in that some gave the impression they had no-one on their staff in whom they could confide and express their feelings freely.

A relatively new deputy head describes the points at which he recognises "stress":

"You reach a standstill. You can't prioritize. It does happen at different levels in education..... and it will happen to me over this year, periodically."

A senior teacher saw the link between the new job and in some cases the "shock" of the experience, with feelings of stress and fatigue.

"I think the tiredness comes because you're having to be so alert - because everything is new. Just like chance conversations - you're trying to interpret what people stand for - if you're used to the situation you don't need to do that."

However newly appointed senior management team members were not alone in describing pressures and associated feelings of stress and fatigue. Their longer serving colleagues with more experience also described similar feelings. Experience, it seems, does not necessarily mean an absence of stress. "Very knacker... I'm exhausted. (Senior teacher - several years in post.)

Another senior teacher who had been in post for nine years commented:

"It is absolutely exhausting in every way, especially when you are new to it - not that it gets easier necessarily - you have to consider every single move."

With this person, fatigue was a major problem - not just mental and physical but also emotional. "You wear yourself to a frazzle every day. What's it all for?"

## 6:2 Causes of Stress

During the interviews members of the senior management teams put forward their views as to what it is that actually causes stress and fatigue.

"Your work is very much with people. People are knackered - far more demanding than dealing with paper and exam boards. They don't argue with you and answer back."

"The 'dealing with people', mediating between different individuals or groups both staff and pupils.... produces the 'knackered' feeling."

"Syllabuses are predictable - kids aren't. I have this counselling role with staff. 'Can't handle it - done everything' or 'what shall I do next?' This created enormous fatigue."

"A boy... really hard to deal with.... he threw it all back in my face. I went home feeling under stress. I was trying to give lots of support to other people but there was little support for me."

"If it isn't dealing with staff and pupils, then there were parents to see....."

"He (a parent) got agitated.... because I wouldn't accept his point of view.... one of the more stressful incidents I've had."

"I was thrown in the deep end and had parents coming in and raving at me."

The role of the senior manager can be very different from any other in a school.

"It is the simultaneous collision of events.... the main problem is juggling so much."

"Just so many things happening at once and you are very wary because of the pressure of things to be done.... and the sort of stress that goes with knowing that you've got to be listening all of the time and at the same time you are trying to attend to countless other things - that is what I mean by a stress feeling.... that's daily stress to me."

Some senior managers took their job - and stress - home with them.

"There's the stress of worrying about actually coping with the demands of the job in a more broader way and the stress that you take home with you wondering just how you can resolve a problem...."

Deputy headteachers are often perceived by teaching staff, pupils, parents and conveniently by their heads as performing an 'umbrella' of different responsibilities. These can represent a wide range of duties; tasks which can be important or trivial; being "pig in the middle" between staff and the head; and being prepared to "take all", which can lead to frustration.

".... the frustration that you've come in to do a major important job that day: your absolute priority in getting the launching of the new prospectus underway, but you haven't touched that job because of the daily pressures...."

My research tends to bear out the work of Dunham (1984) and Knutton & Mycroft (1986) when they highlight a number of areas that help to account for the pressures felt by the senior management team. These pressures can be divided into three main groups, namely, a wide range of responsibilities, role conflict and difficult relationships with headteacher/staff/pupils/parents. It is interesting to note that those senior managers whose job could be loosely defined as "pastoral", especially drew attention to their feelings of stress and fatigue. They commented on pressure from staff and pupils as well as parents, as they always seemed to be "on the run". Conversely those who had "curriculum" responsibilities in schools did not place the same emphasis on the stress that they experienced. Knutton & Mycroft (1986) make this observation:

"An interesting suggestion from the survey is that deputies who have responsibility for the curriculum development within the school reported lower stress levels.... this may indicate that curriculum development can, for some deputies, act as a satisfier and in so doing act to reduce overall job stress."

There was no evidence in my research however to suggest that "curriculum development", where one is dealing with ideas, provided greater job satisfaction for deputies than "dealing with people"; it is simply that the former is perhaps less stressful.

In the research interviews with headteachers, deputies and senior teachers, the researcher found that when the question was posed "How do you manage to cope with it all?", the main categories of effects were similar to those identified by Quick and Quick (1979). There were two general categories which emerged; firstly the perceived

effect that the demands were having on the individual and secondly the development of 'coping strategies.'

### 6:3 Effects of Stress

A number of those interviewed were suffering from fatigue which appeared to be a gradual build up due to extended demands of the job. Not only is it mental fatigue but physical tiredness as well. Some interviewees were aware that their own personal inner resources have been reduced and that they lack energy.

One headteacher reflected on the tension and resentment of the job created by the short nights and consequent tiredness. The reduced hours of sleep during the working week, the tiredness and the falling asleep in front of the television was identified by one deputy as a regular occurrence in recent years. The change in sleeping patterns between term time and holiday time is noticeable in many senior managers. Sleep disturbance can be caused by over-activity during the working day thus preventing an adequate 'wind down' before the next day. If this level of hyper-activity continues over a sustained period then from some members of the senior management team it signifies undue stress.

The underlying tiredness was linked to a feeling of being 'drained' and the need of greater recovery time. The fatigue results for some in disillusionment and loss of enthusiasm for the job.

Every school is different and the personality of each senior manager varies. However it became apparent during the research that senior

management team members were working an extremely long day. The continual level of work throughout the day makes it difficult to have 'breathing time'. A headteacher reflecting on the difference between now and his previous job as a deputy found that he can only have "thinking time" in his own home. The long working day, evening meetings and consultations together with fatigue, create a situation for some senior managers when they have difficulty in sustaining leisure pursuits and find their private life is eroded.

#### 6:4 'Coping Strategies' Developed

On the question of coping with stress interviewees gave many individual responses which were suited to individual needs, and reflecting the particular context of their school and their management role within it.

"It was a relief to get in the classroom...." (senior teacher)

"I can shut the door (his office) at the end of the meeting" (headteacher)

"I run every day. It's important to be physically active and mentally fit. I feel the two are equated in the sense. I do switch off from work. I can say: 'that's the job finished for today.'" (deputy head)

"There are little tactics you can use to show people where you really stand. You can put yourself up on the cover list and the staff do appreciate what you're doing for them - very often it was easier to



sit in a classroom and get appreciation for doing cover at the same time." (deputy head)

"I now, last thing at night plan my priorities: a list of important tasks and a list of urgent tasks - first thing I tackle is the urgent tasks and the important things get done by me setting a deadline for them for when they have to be done - and they move up into the urgent list and I'm absolutely ruthless about it. And every day I think does this need to be done this evening - could I find a slot for it tomorrow.... it is all about planning and prioritising." (deputy head: 5 years in post)

Many senior managers mentioned the need for support: some lacked it, others searched for it and became part of informal "support groups".

"I'd built into a support group outside of school. I off-loaded a lot of stuff there...." (deputy head)

It may be part of the mystique of senior management held by some staff in some schools that the senior manager is under stress as a matter of course. When the researcher commented to one senior teacher that he look very relaxed, his reply was:

"Someone else said that to me - suggesting I don't work! So you've got to look worried as well!"

#### 6:5 Final Remarks

There is growing concern in all walks of life about 'stress in management'. It emerges from this research that senior management in schools places demands on the individuals. Some cope with the pressure better than others. All individuals need to develop coping

strategies but stress is an individual response to a particular environmental situation and there is no panacea to enable everyone to cope on every occasion. Members of the senior management teams have indicated their needs which, if satisfied, might go some way to reduce stress on the job.

THE ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS  
IN SECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

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7:1 The Needs of the Headteacher as Perceived by the Interviewees

The prime function of the head is to manage the school. It was emphasised by most headteachers who were interviewed that the head needs a "sense of vision" to be effective and this involves handling change with all its inherent complexities and demands. According to one headteacher, "The overall demands of the job of headteacher have generally been underestimated by individuals prior to taking up the appointment." The "lack of preparation for headteachers" as well as "inadequate induction provision" and systematic developmental programmes in headship are the focus of major criticism (Nicholson 1989. Cave and Wilkinson 1990). The growth in central directives, legislation and accountability has placed increased demands on schools in recent years (Spencer 1991). The effects on headteachers of these developments have been perceived by those interviewed as increasing the level of stress on individuals. Just as schools are all different and unique, so too do individual heads react in different ways to stress. Therefore there is no one way to solve the problem of the increased demands.

Headteachers interviewed identified two major areas of need when asked to reflect on the focused question 'what do heads need to be effective in their job?'

### 7:1:1 Training

The provision of a systematic, on-going management development programme is required so that changing needs of headship can be taken into account, e.g., Preparation for headship; Induction and early years in headship; Post early years in headship.

### 7:1:2 Training: Preparation for Headship

As I listened to headteachers speak of their work the complete lack of training and preparation for headship came over constantly. The apparent lack of systematic appraisal to select and prepare people for management in schools has been seen as a failing in the present system and is only being addressed as this research report is written. Preparation prior to appointment enables potential heads to gain insight and confidence when dealing with complex issues. Some headteachers expressed the view that a training programme for newly appointed headteachers should be considered prior to them taking up appointment. Many headteachers indicated that the job of deputy head is not necessarily sound preparation for headship. As one head stated:

"I never found it difficult taking up headship - despite various unfortunate experiences - but I'd never claim that the job of deputy head is good training for headship". There is also the mistaken assumption that a good deputy head makes a good head. Headteachers indicated that a policy should be established for training future heads who at present hold the post of deputy or senior teacher. This

area of selection and training for headship appears to be crucial in the minds of some headteachers. One claimed:

"The needs of headteachers is a very complex problem. Firstly, there has to be a good selection procedure. Headship is not for everyone. There is a good case for a sabbatical and they can visit other schools of a wider selection - see the bad schools as well as the good."

Not everyone however would support the view of one headteacher who advocates "long service" before becoming a head.

#### 7:1:3 Training: Induction and Early Years in Headship

The data of Weindling and Earley (1987) suggested that headteachers found visits to the new school to be very important in order to gather information and to establish relationships with staff. The assumption here is that schools are sufficiently different and there is sufficient margin of manoeuvre for visits by newly appointed headteachers to be worthwhile. They claim that most of the newly appointed headteachers were greatly concerned about innovation and felt that they were expected to make changes.

One headteacher who I interviewed reflected with great clarity on the difficulties of the first year in headship:

"I sometimes felt lost in my first year. I felt I wanted to go back to where I was among friends. It's an isolated, lonely position is

headship. Especially if your family have not moved. Lack of support I felt greatly. I'd had no training to be a head."

Some LEA'S have attempted to develop headteacher induction programmes but heads have come to their new post with a variety of experiences and consequently their training needs might differ. One headteacher stated:

"Heads need different things at different stages. You need training in finance and administration in the beginning. You need a support group early on. You need some input on the decision making and the way that decisions might affect other people. It's now called interpersonal relationships. What I need now is more experience on one to one interviewing techniques."

The headteacher induction programme should be tailored for the needs of individual headteachers according to their previous experience and present need. The view was expressed of utilising the skills of experienced heads to run courses for younger colleagues because "I never had this help". One longer serving head perceived that the 'young generation' appeared to be better trained as managers. However because of this variation of experience and length in headship a much closer look needs to be taken at providing a systematic developmental programme for headteachers.

#### 7:1:4 Training: Post Early Years in Headship

Buckley (1985) identifies the main areas which need to be covered in the early years of headship development:-

1. Managing oneself
2. Managing people
3. Managing the Curriculum
4. Managing Resources
5. Managing the Organisation
6. Managing Change
7. Managing External Relations
8. Leadership
9. Knowledge of the Law (p.38)

Headteachers identified similar needs to Buckley and expressed a need for a more systematic approach to on-going training in headship.

"I think that on-going training is a crucial part of the job which is grievously lacking."

One headteacher who had been in post for a number of years felt "left behind" and said that he would benefit from INSET or "learning from others" to overcome his feeling of vulnerability.

The whole aspect of "handling change" poses problems for school leaders. "I am not afraid of change but I do believe that I have not been sufficiently prepared" said one head.

The inadequacy of training in headship recurs constantly in the interviews.

"I feel that we are being asked to do a job for which we are ill equipped or not equipped at all."



Some were of the view that it is important for the needs of individual headteachers to be reviewed after a period of up to five years in office. Short INSET courses appear necessary for headteachers but they in themselves can create extra demands.

One headteacher who expressed an extremely positive attitude towards INSET and its impact on the school where he works, advocated compulsory professional training for headteachers. Not all would agree with this view. One head personally blocked any form of personal in-service training on the grounds of 'lack of time' and being too busy in the school. On the other hand one head suggested a period of secondment of at least a term. "I think it is necessary to have periods of time to stand back and gain a sense of perspective." However, the same headteacher expressed a concern that LEA's have expected documents to be produced during the period of secondment. This demand can prove counter-productive in certain cases.

"Heads need a sabbatical and not to have to produce documents. Go round other schools and see what they are doing. Have time for reflection and be trusted to use that time sensibly."

For another head the pace of headship is such that it gets the "adrenalin going" and to be away on secondment for a term appeared to raise some of the stress systems created through boredom, lack of activity or involvement. He had been on a University Schoolmaster Fellowship and claimed:-

"I found on the term away that I was wanting to get back. I missed the hum of school life. I found being closeted up in a University oppressive. There was not enough going on."

Despite this claim, headteachers generally are aware of the need for constant retraining over an extended time and many headteachers would place the onus of responsibility on the LEA to respond to this need.

## 7:2 How should Headteacher Training Take Place?

A large proportion of learning which relates to people, management, change etc., seems to lie in the field of acquiring skills in practice rather than acquiring knowledge. Mintzberg (1973) expresses this by challenging the training of managers.

"Cognitive learning is detached and informational, like reading a book or listening to a lecture. It is necessary but cognitive learning no more makes a manager than it does a swimmer. The latter will drown the first time he jumps into the water, if the coach never takes him out of the lecture hall, gets him wet, and gives him feedback on his performance." (p.61)

Yukl (1982) stresses the need for a variety of training methods to be utilised, emphasising the need for experiential learning:

"Training and development of school principals is another promising approach for improving principal effectiveness. The success of the approach depends first on the identification of relevant technical, conceptual and inter-personal skills to be developed in principals.

Success also depends on the selection of appropriate training methods. In the case of inter-personal skills, behaviour modelling and other experiential learning methods have been shown to be effective for training managers." (p.10)

Gray (1985) develops the necessity for the reflexive process of reflecting on one's own experience in order to develop individual understanding of management.

"I think there are some principles that apply to the introduction of management thinking that work across the board. The first principle is that the trainees need to understand how the organisations work; they need a grounding in organisation theory and how people function in groups of various sizes as well as an introduction to the causes and forms of personal behaviour such as motivation, commitment and self interest. I believe the best way of gaining an understanding of organisation theory is by the reflexive process of reflecting on the individual's own experience so that everyone builds his personal theories. I do not believe that learning is a solely cognitive process but depends on the effective development as a condition for appropriate cognition." (p.135)

It seems appropriate that to develop affective courses for headteachers, they must be based on the experiential learning of the participants, both by offering them a wide and varied choice of experiences, and also by helping to provide conditions which motivate the individual person.

Dennison (1985) maintains that courses should:

"also enable headteachers to be more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and how positive features might be utilised and deficiencies could be overcome." (p.223)

This can only be done if the courses relate closely to the work experience of the course members. Course attendance must be considered as only one single component of management training, and must be seen in the wider context of the variety of experiences heads gain in carrying out their work. As management training is skill-centred rather than knowledge-based experiential learning must dominate (Dennison 1985). Research needs to be undertaken into this area of headteacher experiential learning in order that more effective training can be developed.

### 7:3 Support Networks

This is the second area of need identified by headteachers. It would appear from the literature reviewed and from research with headteachers that 'support need' can be met mainly through networks and the value of formal and informal contacts with other headteachers.

A headteacher who had been in the school for seventeen years said that a major strategy for coping with the demands of the job of a head is to "consciously develop a support network." This he claimed could take the form of a "headteacher network".

This view is similar to the suggestion in the work 'Australian School Principals' (1984).

"Principals should be encouraged and supported to visit other schools in their own system. This cross fertilisation is desirable and should lead to a useful exchange of ideas; it could help principals develop networks outside of their immediate environment." (p.29)

Wangberg (1982) writing in 'Educational Leadership' adds support to this viewpoint:

"We need to develop environments where teachers can admit failures, share successes and support one another. Support groups provide such environments. Between meetings, individual members can give additional support through phone calls, notes or visits."

Southworth (1985) when discussing the development of OTTO graduates making an 'on-going' contribution to the LEA programme 'institutionalizes' networks:

"A role I have advocated would be that some course members establish headteacher support groups or networks of 'critical friends'." (p.134)

H. Gray (1985) when writing with regard to support groups explains that "a meeting is a coming together of people with needs that can only be satisfied in some form of mutual relationship." (p.81)

In an evaluation of the DES programme of training in educational management for principals in Northern Ireland by O'Shea (1983), principals were asked to respond to the question, 'What kind of follow up or support would be most helpful to you and your colleagues

who have attended the management education programme?' The responses to this question showed that the majority of principals believed that the best form of support would be a regular contact and opportunities for exchanging ideas with other principals.

In the final summing up of the report the following were noted under 'Points of Interest':

"4. Because of their professional isolation, principals need to meet more frequently with colleagues, whom they perceive as having the clearest understanding of the problems which daily confront them."

"12. Principals would welcome a permanent support structure, such as that of a staff college which could respond to their expressed needs by way of resources, consultancy, residential courses and meetings for specific purposes." (p.79-80)

This possibility of meeting with other heads often arose in conversations during my research. A head who had been in post for five years claimed:

"Perhaps the greatest reinforcement is to come together with other heads. The fact you can openly talk to someone in the same job is a great help."

7:4 The Needs of Deputy Head and Senior Teachers as Perceived by  
the Interviewees

In a major policy statement presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in March 1983 entitled 'Teaching Quality'. It stated:

"The government's aim is to make the best use of available resources to maintain and improve the standards of education. In the schools the teaching force, some 440,000 strong in England Wales, is the major single determinate of the quality of education. The supply, initial training, and subsequent career development and deployment of teachers, are of vital concern to the government and to the nation."

(para. 1)

The same policy statement asserted:

"Senior staff with management responsibilities within the school are of crucial importance. Only if they are effective managers of their teaching staffs and the material resources available to them, as well as possessing the qualities needed for effective educational leadership, can schools offer their pupils the quality of education they have the right to expect. This is why the government attaches importance to in service training for senior staffs in schools."

(para. 83)

If management training is to be effective then it must be planned in such a way that it is systematic, on-going and embraces senior staff

in all schools. One deputy head interviewed who had been in post for sixteen years stated:

"The onus is on the LEA."

McIntosh (1985) examines the nature of the response to school management training by LEA's.

"It would appear that most of the one hundred and four LEA's consider school management training important and are committed to it."

#### 7:4:1 The Role of the LEA

In the document 'Better Schools' (HMSO 1985) the role of the LEA was emphasised in that they:

".... should identify and develop potential for senior management and provide training and support for newly-appointed headteachers."

The majority of headteachers interviewed felt that one way in which deputies and senior teachers can prepare themselves for further promotion is to discover how LEA's work and the constraints under which they operate.

"It is vital that those aspiring to headship be given the opportunity to broaden their vision away from their own school."

This puts an onus on the Authority to ensure that:-

places on committees and working parties must be shared out across the widest possible selection of senior management team members.



- deputies/senior teachers must be made welcome at meetings of heads, where on occasions they may be asked to represent their own head.

There was also considerable support for the idea that the LEA should be "active" with its deputies and senior teachers and that potential heads should be given every encouragement to gain appropriate experience, allowed to develop the necessary skills and given help with practice interviews. This could be done by the professional tutor for senior management teams and may be necessary if, for any reason, a member of the team has not been given the opportunity to develop fully within their own school situation.

#### 7.4.2. A Professional Tutor for Deputies and Senior Teachers

A considerable number of those deputies and senior teachers interviewed applauded the idea of having somebody who could act specifically as the professional tutor for members of the senior management team.

In a minority of cases the headteacher was proposed but in the majority it was felt that it should be someone within the Authority. Many spoke warmly of those who had already acted in that capacity and were grateful to them for the contributions they had made in various areas of personal development, not least in helping recently appointed deputy heads. Perhaps the most often heard criticism was one of lack of continuity as the role was often rotated amongst seconded heads yearly.

"Just as a meaningful relationship is being developed, their term of office comes to an end."

claimed a deputy who had been in post for three years.

Various suggestions were put forward to overcome the difficulty. One deputy of ten years' standing said that "the schools link inspector should take on the role of professional tutor for the senior management team." This has the advantage that the inspector would know the school and individuals very well and would be able to make a pertinent contribution to an individual's development over a longer time period. When I suggested this proposal to a headteacher disapproval seemed to centre on two elements, in particular the lack of specific senior management team experience in some of the senior inspectors. In addition it was felt that as the role of LEA changes under the Education Reform Act there could possibly be a conflict of interest between the inspectorial and the professional tutor type roles.

A senior teacher suggested that perhaps "heads" could be seconded for periods of time exceeding one year." Other members of the same team however felt that this would not prove popular "either with the head or the governing body of the school." A further suggestion was to "appoint a person to the LEA specifically for this purpose." Initially, this seemed a popular choice, but reservations were expressed that the person would soon lose the vital day to day experience of running a school.

The recently set up "consultative teams" in several education authorities appear to have replaced the seconded head role and so the

position of the professional tutor for senior management teams may have to be reconsidered. Perhaps the work could be done on a regional basis with a head being given some time (say 0.2) for a number of years. However, it would seem a pity to lose this external input. In terms of "preparation for senior management headship", the advice which has been given on application forms, interview techniques, extra range of experiences to be sought and suitable courses to attend has all been gratefully accepted. Colleagues also spoke very highly of the quality of advice and support which had been given from members of their own senior management teams. As in all of these personal discussions, the quality of relationship and the feeling of mutual trust is crucial and so, to be able to choose from a range of people, is essential.

#### 7:5 Transferability of Skills and Training

Deputies and senior teachers were asked "How far is it possible to transfer the skills from a previous post to senior management?" Those promoted from middle management posts felt that it does matter what the nature of the post was and the degree of responsibility. "It's remarkable how much you don't know....." (Head of English Faculty promoted to deputy head.)

It would appear that those teachers who held middle management positions and also had a wide ranging 'whole school' brief had developed many of the skills appropriate to senior management. In one school a TVEI co-ordinator promoted to head of middle school/senior teacher had experienced few surprises in his new rôle, the reasons being his previous experience:

"I suppose the thing is I've always been involved in wider things, in whole school developments and therefore I haven't been surprised yet."

In another school a head of Modern Languages had little experience of whole school initiatives and remarks on the difference when he became director of curriculum/senior teacher:

"As a head of department I had my own small team and used their strength and felt a sense of possession of a particular part of the school..... coming in as curriculum director - all that went....."

Not all felt that they had the appropriate "training" or knowledge of skills:

"Didn't know what deputies did, hadn't a clue.... didn't know anything about senior management.... all very naive.... no role models I could aspire to..... wasn't quite ready but grew into it....."

(Deputy, five years in post, previously head of house at another school.)

The problem central to the role of the senior manager is the "no-win", "catch-all" diverse nature of the job.

Consequently the deputies and senior teachers who were interviewed made specific suggestions which could prove helpful to the induction

and on-going development of members of the senior management team.

These suggestions may be classified under three headings:

- (a) An awareness about senior management before applying.

"Those aspiring to senior management should have as part of their professional career the experience of a 'whole-school' responsibility, relating to all the staff, not just a section of it."

This was a view shared by many and it was felt that in this way it may be possible to experience the different perspectives and pressures from different groups in the staff room. This would assist the understanding of the kinds of pressure particularly described by new senior managers (stress and fatigue).

"There must be some attempt to understand in general terms the tasks performed by senior managers."

This, it was thought, could be achieved by shadowing of such tasks. Additionally attending LEA in-service courses where participants are subjected to the practical experience of some of the tasks performed by senior managers and the associated skills required would also be useful.

- (b) Induction before starting.

"Newly appointed deputies and senior teachers should visit their new school and 'research' it."

It was generally agreed amongst those interviewed that knowledge and understanding would thereby be gained about the administrative procedures of the school, academic and pastoral matters, and acceptable standards of behaviour and strategies for dealing with classroom problems. The new school may then become less of a culture shock.

"In their early visits, newly appointed senior managers should 'interview' the present incumbent of their post and attempt to understand how they have defined the role and history thereof."

An insight into how teaching staff saw the present definition of the role could be useful. In addition to talking with the present incumbent, seeing them in action might also be helpful, perhaps shadowing them for a day.

"New senior managers must have some understanding of their tasks and expected role before taking up post."

Interviewees raised the question as to what extent will the new senior manager have to "fit in" to the school or how much flexibility is there for creating their own role and making changes to it? Unless this is established between the new senior manager and the headteacher, tensions can arise between what the latter requires and what the prospective senior manager would like it to be. The staff may have different expectations of the job as well. For those senior managers taking up a post where there was no previous job description, problems can arise unless the role is properly negotiated between the newcomer, the senior management team and the

staff. A contributory factor to early stress when becoming a deputy head/senior teacher could be the anxiety of not knowing the job.

(c) Induction - In Post

Much of the new senior manager's learning is 'on the job' but steps should be taken to alleviate potential problems in the early weeks.

"The new senior manager must be given assistance in getting to know the school, its staff and pupils, its catchment area, links with the LEA, meeting the school's ancillary staff, kitchen staff and EWO."

In many cases a school assumes that a newcomer will 'learn on the job' and find out 'as they go along' but a more formally organised programme acknowledges the new senior manager in the school. It guarantees the opportunity of the newcomer meeting the staff and systems within the school. More importantly, introductions and the process of incorporation are not left to chance meetings and chance conversations.

"The new senior manager's chances of getting to know the school quickly should be maximised."

This may entail undertaking very little teaching at the beginning with a number of tasks being delegated to someone else for a short time until the new incumbent is ready to take them on. Many thought that there was a tendency for senior managers to take on too much, or be given too much to do by their headteacher. The new senior manager needs the necessary time and space to think. A final point raised in

many of the interviews was that ".... there should be support from outside." Many welcomed the opportunity to talk with someone other than staff at their own school.

From the research findings of this enquiry it emerged that several headteachers, deputies and senior teachers took up their posts without receiving management training. They identified in which aspects of their work they considered they needed to be trained in order to become more effective and efficient. During interview they shared, in confidence, their fears, frustrations, ignorances and perceived weaknesses which were normally concealed beneath the cloak of professionalism and the human trait of pride. One headteacher in post for seventeen years said:

"Having worked with the senior management team for a number of years you get to know their weaknesses. You also get to know your own weaknesses - and that is very important. You must never show them but you must always know them." This perhaps is one area of the early years of headship development which Buckley (1985) (p.38) omits; that is, knowing oneself and being open to self criticism.



**8:1 Tasks of the Senior Management Team**

Schools are complex organisations and Senior Management has to respond to the ever changing needs of the institution and society.

It was seen that the prime function of the senior management team was to manage the school. A study of this nature cannot produce prescriptive answers to the problems of management in schools. It has however brought to the fore various aspects of the perceptions of management held by those engaged in senior management. When conducting the field research at no stage did I systematically or consciously categorise individuals. The data is based totally on taped interviews and observations made when visiting the various schools.

Mintzberg's management model (1973) presents the manager as establishing personal contacts which are used to gather information, much of which triggers off decisions within the organisation. Webb and Lyons (1982) in accordance with Mintzberg's views suggest that the chief executive concentrates on external roles, while their managers concentrate on internal roles. Much of the interview data supports the findings of Webb and Lyons who suggest that most of the administrative time of senior staff is spent on routine matters and that team development is limited. The tasks performed by senior staff depended upon the schools' own conventions and none of the senior management teams interviewed matched exactly the theoretical leadership styles developed in recent years.

## 8:2 Recommendations

The research brief was to:-

- (a) investigate the composition, organisation and role of the senior management team in four secondary schools.
- (b) establish the major needs of senior managers in schools with a view to making a contribution to their INSET and professional development.
- (c) consider strategies and produce recommendations for developing senior management teams in secondary schools.

The recommendations are based on the perceived needs of four senior management teams. I have attempted at all times to present and interpret these views with minimal bias or personal prejudice.

8:2:1 A developmental management programme for all senior management teams in secondary schools should be established.

### (a) The Case for a Development Programme

The case for the training of senior management teams has been clearly established at Government level following such publications as 'Teaching Quality' (1983) and 'Ten Good Schools' (1977). The latter expressed the view that:

"The most important single factor in the success of these schools is the quality of leadership of the head."

This was reiterated by the then Secretary of State in an article in Education (1984):

"What matters above all is the quality, character and personality of the headteacher: upon that individual man or woman depends the ethos of the school, its standards, the example set by the staff, the expectation that the staff have of the children..... we know the power for good that a fine head can be."

However, the measures introduced in reality have been superficial and cosmetic. It was found in a study undertaken by Hughes and Fidler (1981) that in any one year, approximately only 1% of headteachers and senior staff were involved in approximately ninety award bearing courses with a significant management component and that approximately 14% were involved in 430 practical, non-award bearing courses from one to twenty days in length.

In 1985 Lyons, Stenning and McQueeny found that a picture emerged of headteachers who are not equipped or trained to deal with the growing complexity of staff management problems.

"The headteacher is called upon to deal with these matters virtually on a daily basis and has done so with a lack of formal knowledge and the background of skills and experience which would be available to him or her as a manager in other employment sectors." (p.68)

In recent years there has been a proliferation of material dealing with managerial development both in the private and public sectors of business. Within the field of education management the case has been established for headteacher and senior management training. There appears to be common agreement in the literature as to the general content of the areas that need to be covered in leadership development (Buckley 1985).

(b) Research findings regarding training needs of existing senior management teams as perceived by the interviewees

The headteachers, deputies and senior teachers who took part in the research perceived their personal training needs as follows:

(1) The management team need to reappraise the realistic direction in which they should be leading the school.

All management teams identified their prime function as managing the school and it was therefore essential that the headteacher had a sense of "vision" or sense of "direction".

(2) senior management teams need ongoing support and training to bring about the complex matter of institutional change. Headteachers identified bringing about change as the second most important part of their job; however there are many difficulties in accomplishing this.

(3) Members of the team should be encouraged to develop a planned strategy to bring success to the school.

(4) Management teams require training in leadership skills, particularly in the area of motivating staff and leadership styles.

(5) Senior managers require systematic training in all aspects of external communications - publicity, press, parents, community etc.

(6) Specific topics covering 'stress in management' and 'stress coping strategies' should form part of a development programme.

The findings of the research would appear to confirm the views expressed in the literature that the demands on all members of the senior management team have increased in recent years. These demands may result in stress which can take many forms. Stress and its management are difficult to study because stress is an individual and subjective experience. However this does not negate the need to study stress. It might be worthwhile considering introducing such a course of study together with other people in management positions who are not headteachers or deputies. There is a great deal of value in integrating professional people at a similar level of responsibility for such a course. It then reduces the idea that one profession alone is subjected to intense demands and people develop an appreciation for the fact that others have similar problems.

In a report commissioned by the MSC and National Economic Development office and produced by Coopers and Lybrand, a firm of accountants and management consultants, the authors were highly critical of the low priority given to training in major institutions (TES 20/12/85). They indicated that there was a correlation between training investment and productivity at all levels. If this is the case in

the major business institutions of this country then perhaps it applies also within the education sphere. There is certainly an expressed need for a development programme for all members of the senior management team to be established, possibly at a local authority or grant maintained centre level.

8:2:2 A training programme should be established for headteachers and deputies prior to their commencing an appointment.

Andrew Rowe writing in the TES (18/7/86) under 'How to shape heads to shape our schools' returns to the theme of the establishment of a staff college by referring back to the James Report of 1972.

8:2:3 An Induction Programme for senior management should be tailored to the needs of the individuals according to their previous experience and present needs. For example 'preparation for headship' does not stop on the day of appointment. That may be the crowning success of the critical first stage, but in a very real sense the developmental work has only just begun. After discussions with current headteachers, the overwhelming impression was that their own induction was either non-existent or very minimal at best. It seems paradoxical that so little time, effort and thought have been put into induction of headteachers (though this situation is fully supported in the literature). Simply in monetary terms they are the most expensive single human resource within a school, costing up to £550,000 over a ten year period. It would perhaps be wrong to lay down a procedure to be followed by all new incumbents. Experienced heads taking up their second or third headships have very different needs to deputies appointed to their first. Equally, Out of County

appointees to schools which are not grant maintained would require different procedures to In County. However 'induction' generally should be deemed important, planned carefully and seen as only the beginning of an ongoing process. Entitlement to a planned programme over a number of years would be the ideal for which to aim and this programme could be very tightly linked with evaluation, appraisal and review. Regular support would be a priority during the induction year but needs would be regularly reviewed following this.

The research undertaken suggests that the following elements should play a part in the induction of headteachers.

(1) Information: (perhaps in a loose leaf booklet so that it is easily updated). LEA or GMC management structure, philosophy, policies and recent circulars should be included as well as an outline of the authority's main procedures and mechanisms.

(2) Meeting key LEA or GMC Personnel: the CEO, DCEO, Chief Inspector, Link Senior Inspector, Area Education Officer, appropriate Building Inspector etc.

(3) Support Group: referred to by interviewees as "network". Additionally a 'New Head Mentoring Programme' is being piloted by the Educational Assessment Centre in Oxford. The Secondary Heads Association strongly supports the idea of properly, organised support to new heads in post. Their National Education Assessment Centre at Oxford Polytechnic is a leading body in mentor training and a set of principles for quality mentoring has been established. Mentors need:

"Success in headship, high level communication skills particularly in one to one relationship, very well developed listening skills, experience in counselling, interviewing and negotiating, to be trained to promote learning and development, to be willing to share time and expertise, to be open in their own shortcomings."

(SHA 1992)

(4) Arrange visits to new school: A number of short visits to the new school was felt to be very important, if only to start developing relationships with members of the senior management team and other key people.

(5) Agenda of items to be considered: some heads felt that a non-prescriptive check list of things to be considered by a new head, prepared by the LEA or GMC, would prove helpful so that key items were not overlooked in the hectic and critical first few months.

The time prior to taking up appointment is a very scarce resource. Time is needed to complete the current job, yet it is also crucial to begin thinking and planning for the new one.

8:2:4 A policy for training future headteachers who at the present time hold the post of deputy head or senior teacher should be established. The perceived need is to prepare colleagues gradually for the work of a head and not for it to come as a sudden first day shock. However, some headteachers interviewed indicated that the position of deputy head is not necessarily sound preparation for headship.



Questions are raised by many about selection for headship. The work of Morgan, Hall and Mackay (1983) found that candidates were selected on the basis of idiosyncratic notions of personality and image which were generally applied to an unspecified or outdated view of the nature of the job. Nevertheless there is a professional responsibility to improve the system of selection and one of the avenues is to provide better pre-headship training. This can also serve to heighten the awareness of the individual potential applicant as to whether or not that person wishes to become a firm applicant in the future.

In 1984 a conference on the POST project was held in London attended by Sir Keith Joseph and all teacher unions except NUT. A list of agreed principles for the selection of headteachers was announced. Of these, one read as follows:

"There is a need to identify people with leadership potential early in their career, and develop their management expertise" (Education p.170 2/3/84). Analysis of the responses from those deputy heads interviewed (chapter 5 of the research report) illustrates the enormous diversity of responsibilities exercised by deputy headteachers and senior teachers. It is evident that there is no standardisation of text that makes clear to the job holder (whatever their responsibilities in the school) that the job is an apprenticeship in whole school management which should ideally include opportunities to acquire the full range of senior management skills, not only those exclusively related to pastoral / curriculum / administration. It is recommended that the apparent inequalities that exist in job descriptions, role change opportunities, titles, be

examined carefully and that appropriate changes are given serious consideration by headteachers and governing bodies. This may be seen as a genuine facet of staff development for which headteachers carry a responsibility. It is further recommended that this should be regarded as an expectation of senior management with an accountability factor attached to it.

### 8:3 Team Building

It is important that the whole of the senior management team is involved in the training process. Too often training takes the form of individuals gaining advantage from various management courses and bringing their experience back to school as individuals. Whilst this type of experience is not altogether wasted, greater benefit would be gained by the institution if the team were subjected to a management package that involved them all.

One of the most difficult aspects of the senior team operation is to create the feeling that each individual is part of the team and that it is worth the individual being a member of that team i.e every member of the team gets more from being part of a coherent, cohesive unit with clear policies than they put into the team as individuals. Individuals will not feel part of the team as long as their membership of it does not give them any personal benefit or satisfaction.

Management training must be evaluated in terms of the impact it has on the organisation and management of the school. With individual management training, whatever the main thrust of the training may

have been, it will be difficult to evaluate successfully what impact has been made when the individual returns to the school. This is because the individual may not be able, because of the lack of positive interaction with colleagues, to put into practice the techniques that have been learnt and practised on a management course. If the whole team is involved in this training then it should be possible to evaluate to what extent the team has put training into practice and what impact the training has had on the work of the school. This evaluation should be on a continuing basis, with reviews taking place at regular intervals over a period of months. This would require a commitment from the trainer for that period of time, but clearly training is of little use unless there is some guarantee that what is learnt is being put into practice.

This type of evaluation raises the question of appraisal, certainly in terms of the senior team. By extension this concept could be applied to teachers operating as members of departments and form/year tutors operating in pastoral units. Here again the objective would be to create cohesive teams operating for the welfare and benefit of the children in the school.

#### 8:4 Final Comment

This research report has hopefully raised issues and an awareness of the way in which we manage our schools. It has set out to inform, provoke thought and to stimulate some approaches to developing management in the field of education. In the interests of the whole school the senior management team must perform as well as it can. This will help the school not only to become more effective but also

to become a more satisfying place in which to work and study. From the outset of the research it was not assumed that the reflections would amount to anything representative or that could be generalized; they were individual perceptions as a result of a small scale study.

In the event it would appear that certain of the findings which have resulted in recommendations have wider applicability across the whole range of secondary school senior management teams. They may prove useful to those schools who are seeking to develop their structure and style of management in order to accommodate the recent changes within education.

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